Housing provision and services in the Outer Hebrides should make a strong contribution to health and well-being, encourage population retention, and support the sustainability of our communities.
FOREWORD - CHAIR

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5. OUTER HEBRIDES HNDA

Front Cover:
13a Strond, Isle of Harris
George Stewart
FOREWORD

I am pleased to introduce the Outer Hebrides Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 (LHS), which presents our vision that: “Housing provision and services in the Outer Hebrides should make a strong contribution to health and well-being, encourage population retention, and support the sustainability of our communities”.

This vision reflects the priorities identified by respondents to the LHS consultation process and echoes the wider ambitions of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar as set out in the emerging reviewed Corporate Strategy, and those of our Community Planning Partners, as evidenced in the new Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

The timing of the new Housing Strategy and these other linked documents is opportune, as the new Comhairle elected in May 2017 has been able to influence and take ownership of the overall strategic direction and confirm their commitment to it. This has been done in the context of the Outer Hebrides being on the cusp of an unprecedented period of both opportunity through the ongoing “Our Islands Our Futures” programme and the potential integral “Islands Deal”, and of challenges arising from an ever-increasing ageing population and resultant demographic imbalance.

The specific focus of this LHS is therefore two-fold:

- to assist population retention and the regeneration and sustainability of our rural areas by increasing housing supply and introducing new housing options; and
- to help address the significant potential impact of our population profile on demand for health and social care services and ensure the availability of appropriate housing and related services to maximise care at home and independent living.

We begin working towards achievement of our vision at a time when, like all local authorities, the Comhairle faces another period of general financial constraint, and is very aware that a joint approach with both current and new external partners will be needed if the strategy is to be successfully delivered.

However, we gratefully acknowledge the increased resources to be made available for Affordable Housing provision between 2018 and 2021 and will look for opportunities to work with community landowners and other stakeholders to ensure it is used to best effect throughout the Islands. We are also hopeful that the Islands Deal will come to fruition during the life of the LHS and bring enhanced levels of Scottish and UK Government funding and increased autonomy over its use.

I therefore introduce the LHS 2017 - 2022 with a sense of cautious optimism that the ambitions which it seeks to assist will be progressed to the long-term benefit of the communities of the Outer Hebrides.

Councillor Kenny John Macleod
Communities and Housing Committee
November 2017
CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Legislative Context and Purpose of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS)

1.1.1 Comhairle nan Eilean Siar undertook a whole-stock transfer in 2006 but retains the responsibilities of Strategic Housing Authority for the area. Our Local Housing Strategy (LHS) has been developed in terms of the statutory duty imposed on Local Authorities by Section 89 of The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. It is primarily based on the findings of a Housing Needs and Demand Assessment carried out in line with Scottish Government Guidance using the recommended on-line model and assessed as “robust and credible” by the Centre for Housing Market Analysis at the Scottish Government and has regard to guidance provided by the Scottish Government in August 2014.

1.1.2 This LHS sets out the ambitions of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and our partner agencies for the delivery of housing and related services across all tenures in the years 2017-2022. These ambitions are designed to facilitate wider corporate objectives relating to reversing population decline and enhancing the provision of health and social care services in the face of challenging demographics. The strategy also ensures that our core statutory responsibilities to: tackle fuel poverty; improve house conditions and energy efficiency; reduce homelessness; increase housing supply; and provide housing support; as well as a plethora of other housing related issues, are addressed in a manner appropriate to the local context while also supporting Scottish Government National Outcomes and Targets.

1.1.3 The Strategy is based on priorities identified from a range of credible evidence bases and the outcomes of a stakeholder consultation exercise and continues the strategic emphasis of the LHS 2011-2016. It also draws on the results of a consultation undertaken by the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (OHCPP) using the Place Standard Tool, which has informed the content of the draft Local Outcome Improvement Plan. The outcomes and actions detailed in this document provide a framework for joint working which will optimise the use of our resources and expertise and will address the issues currently affecting the distinctive Outer Hebrides local housing system and through that support the wider priorities of the Community Planning Partners.

1.1.4 The LHS aims to:

- Fulfil our statutory obligations and take account of Scottish Government Policy priorities;
- Demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that the Outer Hebrides offers good quality, appropriate housing stock and related services to facilitate the social, economic and physical well-being of island residents;
- Set out the links between the LHS and other corporate strategies;
- Provide clarity on the housing contribution to the vision and objectives of the Outer Hebrides Health and Social Care Partnership (OHHSCP);
- Show how housing can assist the aims of the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership, particularly in relation to addressing population decline and the demographic imbalance;
- Build on the experiences and successes of the LHS 2011-2016;
- Address the key issues identified through the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment;
- Reflect the feedback received from stakeholders during the consultation phase of LHS preparation;
- Clearly demonstrate the strategic direction for housing investment during the lifespan of the LHS.
1.2 The Strategic Framework: National Priorities

1.2.1 In 2011, the Scottish Government launched the national housing policy document ‘Homes Fit for the 21st Century’. This set out the vision and strategy for the decade to 2020 with an end goal of a housing system which provides an affordable home for all.

1.2.2 To support the strategy the Scottish Government introduced Housing and Regeneration Outcomes Framework linked to the National Outcomes for Scotland. Local Authorities must ensure that their Local Housing Strategies support the central vision and contribute to achievement of the national outcomes.

### NATIONAL OUTCOMES

**Housing Vision:** All people in Scotland live in high quality sustainable homes that they can afford and that meet their needs.

**Regeneration Vision:** A Scotland where our most disadvantaged communities are supported and where all places are sustainable and promote well-being.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A well-functioning housing system</th>
<th>High quality sustainable homes</th>
<th>Homes that meet people's needs</th>
<th>Sustainable communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability and choice</td>
<td>Safe</td>
<td>Accessing a home</td>
<td>Economically sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes people can afford</td>
<td>Warm</td>
<td>Keeping a home</td>
<td>Physically sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of supply</td>
<td>Resource efficient</td>
<td>Supporting Independent living</td>
<td>Socially sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote well-being</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Scottish Government

1.2.3 There is a raft of other national legislation and policy priorities which impinge on the LHS and help to underpin the outcomes framework. The following is not an exhaustive list, but identifies those which we consider the most significant in terms of influencing the direction and delivery of the LHS.

- Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and Land Use Strategy
- Private Rented Housing (Scotland) Act 2011
- Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009
- Age Home and Community – a Strategy for Housing Scotland’s Older People 2012-2021
- Public Bodies (Joint Working Act) 2014
- Scotland’s Sustainable Housing Strategy
- Welfare Reform Agenda
1.3 The Local Strategic Planning Framework

1.3.1 It is crucial that the LHS links clearly to the ambitions of the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership, the Comhairle’s Corporate Plan and the Development Plan.

1.3.2 The LHS is also aligned with the OHHSCP Strategic Plan and other impinging local plans and strategies.

LHS STRATEGIC CONTEXT

1.3.3 The LHS is being developed at a particularly opportune time in relation to the wider local strategic framework. This gives us an opportunity to identify the high level strategic direction which will support other evolving agendas, but means that beyond the early years of the strategy, the detail of some areas of housing activity - for example the location of new housing provision - cannot currently be determined, as the intention is that these link to as yet unspecified initiatives to support population retention.
1.4 Draft Local Outcome Improvement Plan

1.4.1 The OHCPP is required to produce a long term strategic plan, the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, which identifies the key priorities and outcomes for our communities.

1.4.2 The Partnership's approach is based on the principle of the Outer Hebrides as a special place. The geography, culture, history, and environment are all elements that contribute so much to the quality of life that our communities enjoy as evidenced in many studies which identify the Islands as one of the best places to live in Scotland and the UK.

1.4.3 The Islands, however, face significant challenges. The economy is fragile, and the demographic of our population is, currently, the second worst in Scotland with the trend projected to get worse over the next twenty years. Set against a background of financial restraint and reducing resources, the challenges we face are growing and the OHCPP is committed to working together in partnership with our communities to create transformational change and achieve a sustainable population.

1.4.4 Community Engagement and analysis through the ‘How Good Is Our Place’ survey tool enabled residents in the Islands to identify their priorities and ways in which improvements could be delivered. In response to this community engagement, the OHCPP has identified a small number of priorities which focus on tackling these issues going forward and these are presented in the draft Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP).

1.4.5 The LOIP replaces the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) for the Outer Hebrides and is different from any previous community plan. It is more localised and is aimed at empowering communities to respond positively to the priorities and concerns they have identified.

1.5 OHCPP Vision

1.5.1 The CPP vision is to promote and realise the full potential of the Outer Hebrides as a prosperous, well-educated and healthy community enjoying a good quality of life, fully realising the benefits of our natural environment and cultural values.

1.5.2 The priorities for the OHCPP over the next 10-20 years, as identified in the LOIP, are:

1. The Outer Hebrides retains and attracts people to ensure a sustainable population
2. The Outer Hebrides has sustainable economic growth and all our people have access to appropriate employment opportunities
3. The islands offer attractive opportunities that improves the quality of life, wellbeing and health for all our people

1.5.3 It is clear that the LHS can make a significant contribution to these areas of activity, particularly to:

Priority 1 - The Outer Hebrides retains and attracts people to ensure a sustainable population

1.5.4 The OHCPP have identified a number of areas to facilitate achievement of this priority, including:
Our housing reflects the needs of a sustainable population by ensuring there is affordable housing across the islands.

1.5.5 A number of potential housing-specific goals and outcomes have also been identified by the OHCPP which will be refined prior to the LOIP submission and should reflect the direction of the LHS.

1.6 Our Islands Our Future

1.6.1 Also developing in the background of the local strategic planning context is the ‘Our Islands Our Future’ campaign. This was launched in June 2013 by the three Island Councils (Orkney, Shetland and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar) and set out a vision for the future of the Islands following the Independence Referendum in 2014. Since then, despite the referendum outcome, a joint working group has been engaging in discussions with the Scottish Government regarding the development and extension of local democracy in the island groups as further recognition that they face challenges different from other parts of the country.

1.6.2 Both the Scottish and UK governments have recognised the potential of the Islands and in 2014 made strong statements of support: the Scottish Government in ‘Empowering Scotland’s Island Communities’ and the UK Government in ‘A Framework for the Islands’.

1.6.3 Both have since taken steps to honour those commitments: the Scottish Government with the Islands Bill and the UK Government with the devolution of the Crown Estate. It is clear that both governments value our islands and the principles upon which the campaign is based, and the discussions have led to the development of a proposal for a Deal for the Islands.

1.6.4 The Deal focuses on the additionality which could be generated by a suite of unique projects, programmes and governance arrangements, and realised through the firm commitment and shared understanding of the three island groups, the UK and Scottish Governments, and our partners in the public, third and private sectors.

1.6.5 The Vision reflected in the draft Deal contains a number of aims to direct activity over the next 10 years, some of which can be supported through this Local Housing Strategy:

- Sufficient affordable and smart housing provision throughout the islands to accommodate our target population increases and meet 21st Century requirements for home working, smaller households and ageing populations.
- Greatly reduced fuel poverty through measures addressing the cost and availability of fuel, low incomes and energy efficient housing.
- A significant improvement in the age structure of our island populations, by focusing on job creation for the younger working age population in the implementation of Deal projects and programmes, with associated skills development for all.

1.6.6 Should the Islands Deal come to fruition there could be a significant increase in the resources available to the Comhairle and the other Islands Councils, along with flexibility and greatly enhanced local autonomy over their use.

1.6.7 The synergy between the housing related aspirations of the draft LOIP and the Islands Deal is clear. It is important that the focus of the LHS supports these two developing issues and has the flexibility to respond appropriately as the detail of them becomes clearer.
1.7 Corporate Strategy 2017-2021

1.7.1 The Corporate Strategy is currently being updated to reflect the policy priorities of this term of the Comhairle and the requirements of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 in respect of the development of the LOIP and related locality plans.

1.7.2 One of the four draft priorities is Communities and Housing, with an end objective of strengthening and maintaining our rural communities by ensuring that population stability and balance is improved, that more young people choose to stay in the Islands, and that a good balance is achieved between pre-school, school, working age and retired residents.

1.7.3 In relation to Housing, the potential actions to help achieve this are:

- Deliver the aims and objectives of the Outer Hebrides Local Housing Strategy.
- Ensure that residents across the Outer Hebrides have equal access to high-quality, low-cost housing.
- Provide a housing mix that supports business growth.
- Work with partners to ensure support mechanisms are in place to enable elderly people to remain in their own homes and communities.

1.8 Development Plan

1.8.1 The LHS has been prepared in tandem with consultation and ongoing preparations for a new Local Development Plan which should be in place during 2017-2018.

1.8.2 The proposed Plan informs that Housing is a key development activity on the islands with 593 houses being completed in the last 5 years.

1.8.3 The Plan recognises that the siting and design of development is important in contributing to the quality and sustainability of the environment within which we live and work and is also a practical means of achieving a wide range of social, economic and environmental goals.

1.8.4 The Housing related policies within the Plan and the Housing Supply Target set in this LHS have been developed and agreed between the Development Planning and Housing Services Teams and more detail is provided in Chapter 2 where the local context is described.

1.9 Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan

1.9.1 The OHHSCP Strategic Plan 2016-2019 was prepared in terms of The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014. The vision underlying the Plan is that:

by 2020 the people of the Western Isles will be living longer, healthier lives at home, or in a homely setting. We will have an integrated health and social care system, which focuses on preventing ill-health, anticipating care needs and supporting recovery.

1.9.2 The integral Housing Contribution Statement details the areas of work which housing partners undertake to provide in support of the Strategic Plan.
1.9.3 The LHS consultation exercise identified strong support for the new Strategy to be geared to facilitating advancement with the Health and Social Care agenda. More detail on Independent Living is provided in Chapter 6 of the document.

1.9.4 This is a time both of great opportunity for the Islands communities and of uncertainty as major agendas evolve and likely resource levels become known. The common and supportive strategic direction of the various documents mentioned above will contribute to achievement of the wider ambitions of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and the Community Planning Partners in the coming years.

1.10 LHS Development Process

1.10.1 The development of the LHS has been carried out within this very fluid local context and was led by the Comhairle’s Housing Services Team, overseen up until draft strategy stage in June 2017, by the Local Housing Strategy Member Officer Working Group (LHS MOWG). This multi-agency group is the core forum for joint strategic working with our principal partners and essentially makes up the Outer Hebrides Housing Market Partnership (HMP). The Comhairle has been a non-landlord Council since 2006 but retains the statutory role of strategic housing authority and as such has lead responsibility for the LHS MOWG. The effectiveness of the group is critical to a shared understanding of the housing related issues facing the islands and to reaching agreement regarding potential solutions. The membership comprises:

- Comhairle Elected Members;
- Comhairle Officers - Housing Services, Development Planning, Finance and Corporate Resources;
- Senior representatives of the OHHSCP;
- Directorate representatives of Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP) (the Housing Association created to facilitate the transfer of the whole local authority housing stock in 2006 and still the sole mainstream RSL on the Islands);
- Directorate representatives of Tighean Innse Gall (TIG) (local Housing Agency providing development services for the affordable housing new build programme along with a range of housing related services e.g. Care and Repair, Energy Efficiency Works, Home Safety and Minor Works).

1.10.2 Aside from the LHS MOWG membership, the Comhairle Housing Team works with and has consulted a wide range of local and national bodies, e.g. utilities companies, Third Sector organisations and community groups. There has been some initial work done with the increasing number of Community Trusts involved in land buyouts, and it is expected that these will play an important part in influencing housing strategy direction in future years. However, there is no organised forum representing the local construction sector and speculative building is so minimal that there is no developer organisation either.

1.11 LHS 2011-2016 Review

1.11.1 A crucial phase in the development of the new strategy was an end evaluation of the outcomes of the LHS 2011-2016. This was based on five key strategic outcomes which were identified following extensive consultation with local communities and which contributed to the long-term outcomes of the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership. Interim reviews had been carried out at intervals during the lifespan of the Strategy and reported through the LHS MOWG and the Comhairle’s Committee processes.

1.11.2 The review is summarised below and confirmed that progress had been made but also provided justification to continue work on the same themes in the LHS 2017-2022.
### LHS Outcome 1
More households live in good quality, dry, warm, and energy efficient housing that minimises the risk of fuel poverty and contributes to a reduction in carbon emissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant Indicators</th>
<th>Targets</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Reduction in the number of currently occupied BTS properties</td>
<td>Less than 635 occupied BTS dwellings</td>
<td>Achieved - 390 BTS properties as per HCS 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Maximise the number of major repair applications for Scheme of Assistance</td>
<td>100 approved applications</td>
<td>Not Achieved - due to reduction in available funding &amp; eligibility criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Reduction in the gap between the percent of fuel poor households in Outer Hebrides and Scotland</td>
<td>Gap between Scotland and Outer Hebrides reduced to 20% or less</td>
<td>Partially Achieved - Outer Hebrides - 59%, Scotland - 35%. Gap 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Reduction in the gap between the percent of extreme fuel poor households in Outer Hebrides and Scotland</td>
<td>Gap between Scotland and Outer Hebrides reduced to 15% or less</td>
<td>Partially Achieved - Outer Hebrides - 26%, Scotland -10%. Gap 16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Percentage of families and pensioner households in fuel poverty</td>
<td>Reduction in percent of fuel poor families and pensioner households</td>
<td>Achieved - Families: 26%, Pensioners: 73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Average NHER rating for occupied housing stock in all tenures</td>
<td>Average NHER rating exceeds 4</td>
<td>NHER no longer recorded in SHCS but trend was improving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 % Properties rated NHER 4 or less</td>
<td>50% of properties have a NHER rating or 4 or less</td>
<td>NHER no longer recorded in SHCS but trend was improving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 Number of households who accessed energy efficiency national funding (UHI etc) in year to March 31</td>
<td>An average of 500 households assisted each year</td>
<td>Partial - average of 350 households per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9 % of RSL homes that comply with the SHQS at March 31</td>
<td>100% of non-exempted social sector dwellings meet the SHQS</td>
<td>Achieved for all non-exempted properties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### LHS Outcome 2
The balance between housing supply and demand is improved so that more households can secure a suitable home in their preferred area at a price they can afford

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant Indicators</th>
<th>Targets</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Annual number of all new houses constructed to 31 March</td>
<td>On average, 90 units in all tenures completed each year</td>
<td>Achieved - average of 145 per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Total number of new affordable homes completed in Stornoway HMA</td>
<td>Up to 120 affordable units constructed in Stornoway HMA in 5 year period</td>
<td>Partial: 92 units achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Total number of new affordable homes completed in Rural HMA</td>
<td>Up to 60 affordable units constructed in Rural HMA in 5 year period</td>
<td>Partial: 51 units achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Number and proportion of ‘permanent’ social lettings made to new tenants in year to 31 March</td>
<td>At least 85% of vacancies are to waiting and/or homeless applicants</td>
<td>224 Average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ratio of number of non-transfer applicants resident in Islands with a valid application at 31 March in relation to the number of lettings

Ratio remains between 3 and 7 in SHMA and RHMA

Average ratio 2.53

**LHS Outcome 3**
More people can secure the housing services they require to live independently in their preferred choice of accommodation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant Indicators</th>
<th>Targets</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Number of new affordable units built to varying need and wheelchair standard at 31 March</td>
<td>At least 5% of new affordable homes built to wheelchair standard</td>
<td>7.6% achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Annual number of HHP dwellings that are suitable for people with a substantial mobility related disability to 31 March</td>
<td>Maintain minimum of 1 per new development</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Annual number of SoA grants approved to disabled individuals to adapt their home to 31 March</td>
<td>120 major adaptations per year</td>
<td>Partial - average of 111 cases approved per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Amount of investment for adaptations carried out in HHP properties to 31 March</td>
<td>Increase investment in line with available funding</td>
<td>Average of £288k per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Total public spend on aids &amp; adaptations by HHP and CnES (via SoA) to 31 March</td>
<td>Maintain the same level of investment as a minimum</td>
<td>CNES: £610k av HHP: £288 av</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Annual number of households in receipt of a housing support service</td>
<td>Net increase in the numbers of households in receipt of housing support</td>
<td>Annual average 500 households. Baseline figure now considered unreliable in view of improved data systems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LHS Outcome 4**
Fewer households become homeless but those that do are assisted to secure and maintain permanent accommodation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant Indicators</th>
<th>Targets</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Reduction in the number of applicants assessed as homeless or potentially in year to 31 March</td>
<td>10% reduction</td>
<td>Partial: Overall reduction of 5.3% achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Annual number of households assessed as priority need as a percent of the number of applicants assessed as homeless in year to 31 March</td>
<td>100% applicants assessed to be in homeless or potentially homeless in priority need</td>
<td>Achieved as per statutory requirement 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Annual number of homeless households that are in temporary accommodation on 31 March</td>
<td>Less than 80 homeless cases in temporary accommodation</td>
<td>Average of 74.2 cases achieved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The LHS MOWG provided governance in the development of the LHS consultation documents and recommended that consultation should proceed on the basis of four potential strategic priorities:

- Housing Quality
- Supply
- Homelessness
- Independent Living
1.11.4 This decision followed consideration of a number of evidence sources, namely:

- The results of the Draft Outer Hebrides Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2016;
- The 2016 Outer Hebrides Private Sector House Condition Survey (PSHCS);
- A review of achievements against the targets of the LHS 2011-2016;
- Consideration of the Comhairle’s statutory housing responsibilities and current national housing policies and priorities.

1.11.5 This MOWG recommendation was agreed by the Comhairle in December 2016 and a commitment also given that the consultation should consider how the LHS could help support initiatives to address population retention which would be developed under the auspices of the OHCPP.

1.12 LHS Consultation

1.12.1 A number of multi-agency groups, both operational and strategic and covering a range of housing related activities, ensure that the content of the LHS is informed on an ongoing basis through routine discussion, policy and practice development. Carrying out the Housing Need and Demand Assessment is the first discrete piece of work in the LHS development process and engagement with stakeholders on this during 2016 also allowed the review and replacement of the LHS to be discussed informally at an early stage.

1.12.2 The formal LHS consultation phase then ran from January to March 2017 and was conducted using a range of media to ensure engagement with as many local communities, interest groups and individuals as possible and that the composition of the local population was accurately reflected in the process, remembering that some people’s views may not be readily heard through using the traditional engagement methods.

1.12.3 Advertisements and information briefings were published in the local press, community newspapers, and the Comhairle web site. A stakeholder survey was made available in hard copy at key community locations as well as online.

1.12.4 A series of meetings and workshops, including for Comhairle Members and internal stakeholders, were offered, while discussions at existing liaison groups and programmed partnership meetings ensured the inclusion of external agencies. The consultation sessions were tailored to the remit of each audience and additional detailed discussions with potential partners were held in April and May 2017.

1.13 Consultation Outcomes

1.13.1 The engagement with stakeholders confirmed agreement with the four proposed themes. It also generated support for the LHS 2017-2022 to tailor actions related to each of these to emphasise the housing contribution to, and facilitate progress with, the wider corporate agendas of addressing population and migration issues and contributing to achievement of the aims of the OHHSCP.

1.13.2 A summary of the most commonly expressed consultation responses is provided as an Appendix to the Strategy.

1.14 Further Development

1.14.1 The Draft Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 was developed on the basis of the consultation responses and a decision taken to delay finalising the document pending the local Council Elections in June 2017, to allow the new Comhairle Membership time to consider and have ownership of the Strategy.
1.14.2 The draft was presented to the Communities and Housing Committee on 13 June 2017. Further development of the Strategy was delegated to a new Communities and Housing Strategic Member Officer Working Group (MOWG). External partners remained involved in the ongoing discussions as did colleagues working on the new Local Development Plan and this has ensured co-production of each element of the Strategy.

1.14.3 The Communities and Housing Strategic Member Officer Working Group met regularly between June and September 2017, re-affirmed support of the four strategic themes, and undertook detailed consideration of each of these. The Group agreed that the focus of the Strategy should be to assist delivery of the Community Planning Partnership’s priorities of Regeneration and Population retention in rural areas, and providing improved and expanded Health and Social Care services.

1.15 Resources

1.15.1 The availability of adequate financial resources is clearly fundamental to successful delivery of the LHS, and the MOWG has had significant discussion on the sources and levels of funding likely to be available to the Comhairle and partners throughout the strategy period.

1.15.2 The principal activities to be progressed through the four LHS themes, and which will require funding are:

- **Housing Quality**
  - Targeted Housing Grants
  - Empty Homes Project
  - Minor Works Scheme
  - Support for Fuel Poverty Initiatives

- **Funding for the Housing Quality theme would primarily come from the Comhairle’s Capital Programme and potentially from the Our Islands; Our Future ‘Islands Deal’. Given that the private sector is the predominant housing tenure, adequate funding is crucial to the success of the LHS**

- **Housing Supply**
  - Affordable Housing (the Scottish Government has allocated the Comhairle a Resource Planning Assumption of £25m for the period 2018/19-2020/21. This may have to be supplemented by Comhairle Capital or Additional Council Tax from Second Homes)
  - Crofter Housing Grant
  - New Rural Housing linked to Population initiatives

- **Funding for the Housing Supply theme would come primarily from the Affordable Housing Supply Programme and potentially from the Our Islands; Our Future ‘Islands Deal’**

- **Homelessness**
  - Off-the-shelf house purchases for use as Temporary Accommodation
  - Additional supported accommodation

- **Funding for the Homelessness theme would primarily come from the Comhairle’s Capital Programme and potentially from the Our Islands; Our Future ‘Islands Deal’**
- Independent Living
  o Lewis Extra Care Project
  o Disabled Adaptations

- Funding for the Independent Living theme would come from the Affordable housing Supply Programme, the Comhairle’s Capital Programme and potentially from the Our Islands; Our Future ‘Islands Deal’

1.15.3 In relation to Housing Supply and the significant Affordable Housing Planning Assumptions for the period April 2018 - March 2023, discussions have taken place between the Comhairle Leader and the Minister for Local Government and Communities regarding how the Comhairle could ensure maximum benefit is achieved from these very welcome resources to forward the ambitions of the LHS. The Minister has indicated that flexibility in the use of the funds out-with the current Affordable Housing Programme criteria will be considered, and proposals are being developed to take this forward. The outline of these is reflected in the action plans within the Housing Strategy document and will be refined throughout the Strategy period.

1.16 Strategic Outcomes 2017-2022

1.16.1 The completed Strategy was approved by Comhairle in September 2017 on the basis of 4 Strategic Outcomes which address local circumstances and also support national housing priorities:

Theme 1: Housing Quality
Communities are sustained and re-vitalised through improvements to housing quality, condition, and energy efficiency

Theme 2: Housing Supply
Housing supply is sufficient to support people’s needs and aspirations and assist wider corporate aims

Theme 3: Homelessness
Homeless clients can access a range of advice, support, and appropriate accommodation to suit their needs

Theme 4: Independent Living
People can access services and accommodation which promotes and extends independent living

1.16.2 The Comhairle set a Housing Supply Target (HST) of 175 affordable homes for 2017-2022 and an overall housing target across all tenures of 460. More information on this process is provided in Chapter 4 of the LHS.

1.16.3 A number of action points to guide implementation and allow easy monitoring of the Strategy have been developed for each of the four outcomes.
Potential Actions

- consider reinstatement of targeted grant assistance for private sector properties.
- consider targeting grants at empty houses and linking with population initiatives.
- continue partnership approach to maximising resources for fuel poverty/energy efficiency measures across all housing tenures within the wider Fuel Poverty Action Plan.
- contribute to development of local energy supply company.
- Increase investment in services to assist the care at home agenda.
- continue support for achieving single housing funding resource through enthusiasm for potential single pot of housing funding through “Our Islands Our Futures”.
- develop “one stop shop” for advice and information on housing repair and maintenance, energy efficiency, home safety and related financial issues.

Housing Supply is Sufficient to Support People’s Needs and Aspirations and Assist Wider Corporate Aims

Potential Actions

- delivery of 323 Social Rented properties (as per 2018-2023 SHIP)
- delivery of 24 Shared Equity properties (as per 2018-2023 SHIP)
- ensure that provision of new affordable housing meets the needs of both the Stornoway/Broad Bay area and the rural areas and that location, type and size will support wider agendas.
- work with Community Landowners towards provision of new housing within their areas including bringing empty homes back into effective use.
- develop land bank targets for affordable housing, including in partnership with community landowners for rural areas.
- investigate and support self-build and assisted first time buyer initiatives such as Open Market Shared Equity and Rent to Buy with local partners, including community landowners (20 units over the period).
- work with partners to provide Extra Care housing and expansion of supported housing options for vulnerable client groups. (66 Extra Care houses)
- develop opportunities to introduce new tenures such as mid-market rent through working with local agencies.
- investigate potential for introducing an Empty Homes project.
- investigate mechanisms to support and develop the Private Rented sector.
- introduce a generic online housing options guide.
- support attainment of single housing fund.
- on-going work with the SG to encourage Crofter Housing Grant development and investment.
- develop rural regeneration sites
Potential Actions

- work with partners to achieve an accommodation mix (both temporary and permanent) which maximises client choice and mitigates adverse changes to the welfare benefit system.
- work with partners to develop new temporary accommodation options and long term supported accommodation options for clients with addictions.
- develop appropriately supported temporary accommodation for homeless clients with mental health needs in partnership with health and social care.
- develop long term accommodation provision for clients requiring low level support due to Learning Disabilities/Autism.
- re-introduce local multi-agency homelessness network.
- expand and implement youth housing protocols within wider homelessness strategy.
- approve partnership approach to identifying and addressing the health needs of homeless clients.
- expand homelessness prevention work through development of an online Housing Options Guide.
- ensure homelessness is addressed in conjunction with wider Community Planning strategies e.g. social inclusion; Local Outcome Improvement Plan outcomes.
- support introduction of 1 bedroom & 4 bedroom properties into AHSP.

Potential Actions

- identify priorities and develop responses to promote independent living through the Housing Contribution Statement.
- ensure adequate funding to enable adaptations provision to high need clients.
- investigate feasibility of a mechanism to introduce lower level adaptations including telehealth/telecare to the older population in general.
- address gaps in housing provision for client groups requiring support to maintain successful independent living.
- maintain input to introducing an extra care housing model within Lewis residential care re-provisioning.
- monitor implications of proposed housing benefit cap on affordability of existing supported housing and potential impact on planned new provision.
- investigate joint initiative with public health to identify groups particularly vulnerable to the health effects of poor housing, allowing their needs to be prioritised.
- extend Home Safety and Minor Works schemes to help speed up hospital discharges.
- address independent living issues related to housing transitions amongst young people (16-25).
- contribute towards development of an Independent Living Prevention Strategy.
The diagram below illustrates the steps taken in the development and implementation stages of the LHS and highlights the central, critical importance of stakeholder consultation throughout each phase of the process.

The LHS Development Process

1. Prepare Finalised LHS
2. Consultative Draft LHS
3. Appraise Options and Draft Action Plan
4. Identify Housing Market Areas
5. Housing Needs and Demand Assessment
6. Stakeholder Consultation
7. Identify Key Issues and Priorities
8. Review Vision, Aims and Objectives

1.17 OTHER LHS 2017-22 GOVERNANCE ISSUES

DIVERSITY and EQUALITIES

1.17.1 The Comhairle has a statutory obligation through the Equalities Act 2010 and other legislation to advance equality of opportunity and ensure that all its functions and activities are fair and non-discriminatory and carried out in terms of the Act. The authority recognises that equality is key to achieving the OHCPP Vision for the Outer Hebrides and is committed to tackling discrimination; advancing equality of opportunity; and promoting good relations within our communities. Mainstreaming equality, diversity and human rights within our practices and services and valuing the diversity of our employees and communities is central to this.

1.17.2 The Comhairle has developed new Equality Outcomes which are intended to assist in meeting the general equality duty. In relation to Housing, the strategic outcome is to achieve “An improved range of housing models and related services to promote independent living and to support initiatives which encourage people to continue living in the Western Isles”. This will specifically benefit the protected characteristics of Age, Disability, Maternity/Pregnancy and facilitate meeting the public sector equality duty to eliminate discrimination and advance opportunity.

1.17.3 The LHS has been developed with the equality principles interwoven throughout. The consultation was shared with the overarching multi-agency Diversity and
Equalities Strategy Group and directly with a range of groups who represent people with protected characteristics including:

- Lewis and Harris Youth Clubs
- Catch 23 (Mental Health user group)
- Advocacy Western Isles
- Western Isles Community Care Forum
- Learning Disability Support Worker
- Access Panels

1.17.4 There is evidence of small groups being developed locally to represent a broader range of protected groups, e.g. Sexual Orientation and Transgender, and the Comhairle will seek to engage with representatives from these groups as they become established.

1.17.5 In ultimately delivering the LHS 2017-2022, and implementing related housing policies and procedures, the Comhairle and our local partners will endeavour to achieve equality in service provision by acknowledging and adapting to the increasingly diverse and changing needs of our local communities.

1.17.6 In particular, we will ensure that periodic reviews of the Strategy include a monitoring of any national housing related equality developments and that any assessed required changes are implemented.

1.17.7 A full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been carried out to ensure that our proposed objectives and associated actions fulfil our statutory duties and are in line with the Comhairle’s Equality Policy. The EQIA is available as an Appendix to the Strategy document.

1.18 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

1.18.1 The Comhairle has a duty as the “Responsible Authority” in terms of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 to determine whether delivery of the LHS will cause any significant environmental impact and, on that basis, to decide whether a full SEA is required.

1.18.2 The Comhairle undertook a pre-screening exercise as prescribed in Schedule 2 of the Act at LHS consultation stage and submitted this to the SEA Gateway. No representations were made by the consultation authorities. The Comhairle is therefore satisfied that the LHS will not in itself have significant environmental effects and that the overarching Local Development Plan is the principal related strategy requiring full SEA.

1.19 Risk Implications

1.19.1 Risk Management is a statutory duty within local authorities and the Comhairle has adopted proactive risk management arrangements to enable decisions to be based on comprehensively assessed risks, ensuring the right actions are taken at the right time.

1.20 Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation

1.20.1 The LHS 2017-2022, along with related appendices and any subsequent updates, will be published on the Comhairle’s website.
1.20.2 The LHS Outcome and Action Plan is provided as an Appendix to the main document and will be the principal means of monitoring progress and facilitating review of the Strategy. The Communities and Housing Strategic MOWG will have ongoing responsibility for overseeing this work in line with Scottish Government Guidance.

1.20.3 The outcomes of review exercises and any other significant events which could impinge on Strategy implementation will be reported to Communities and Housing Committee for consideration.
CHAPTER 2 - OUTER HEBRIDES: FACTS AND FIGURES

2.1 Geography

2.1.1 The Outer Hebrides (also known as the Western Isles) are situated some 30 miles off the North West coast of Scotland. The chain of more than 70 islands (11 of which are currently inhabited) measures approximately 130 miles from the Butt of Lewis in the north, to Barra and Vatersay in the south.

2.1.2 The islands had 27,684 residents at the date of the 2011 Census. This represents 12,576 households with an average occupancy of 2.17 people. The population is spread across some 280 settlements resulting in a population density of only 9 people per square kilometre.

2.1.3 The main settlements are: Stornoway on Lewis; Tarbert, Isle of Harris; Lochmaddy, Balivanich, Lochboisdale and Daliburgh in the Uists; and Castlebay on Barra.

2.1.4 Stornoway is the largest of the settlements in the Outer Hebrides and the main administrative and commercial centre. It has the largest concentration of population at approximately 6,200 and is home to the headquarters of both the local authority, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (the Comhairle), and NHS Western Isles.

2.2 Population and Demographic Trends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2-1 Population – Island Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barra and Vatersay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Uist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benbecula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Uist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2011 Census

2.2.1 On Census night in 2011 the resident population of the Outer Hebrides was 27,684; in comparison this figure was 26,502 on Census night in 2001. Thus, over the period 2001 to 2011 the Outer Hebrides experienced a population increase of 4.5%, the 18th highest in Scotland; while 4 Council areas experienced a decline. Over the last ten years (between 2006 and 2016) in the Outer Hebrides there has been a -0.6% (164 persons) decrease in population. Figure 2-1 below illustrates the population estimates from 2006 to 2016.
2.2.2 Demographically, the population of the Outer Hebrides is ageing. As Figure 1-2 below illustrates, the greatest decline by age group has occurred in the 30-44 year category (from representing 19.8% of the population in 2006 to 16.2% in 2016). The greatest increase by age group has occurred in the 65-74 category (from representing 10.9% of the population in 2006 to 13.3% in 2016).

2.2.3 Using the 2014 population estimate (27,250) as a base and taking into account key assumptions (mortality, fertility and migration) the total population of the Outer Hebrides is projected to fall to 23,515 by 2039. This is a projected decline of 11.3% or 3,735 people between 2014 and 2039. The equivalent figure for Scotland over the same time period is an increase of 7%.

2.2.4 The 2014 based household projections identify a 0.4% decrease in the number of households in the Outer Hebrides from 12,920 in 2014 to 12,872 in 2039. This is in contrast to the 6% increase forecast in the 2012 based projections. In general, the 2014-based projections are lower. However, the Outer Hebrides is one of only 3 areas experiencing a decrease, along with Inverclyde and Argyll & Bute.

2.2.5 The Outer Hebrides is projected to have the smallest proportion of households with children in 2039 at 15%.

2.2.6 In terms of household headship rates, the following changes are projected: 12% decrease in households headed by person aged 16-29; 16% decrease in those aged
30-44 (highest decrease in Scotland); 32% decrease in those aged 45-59; 5% decrease in those aged 60-74; and a 67% increase in those aged 75 and over.

2.2.7 By 2039 the Outer Hebrides will have over half of the households (56%) headed by someone aged 60 or over.

2.2.8 Assisting the OHCPP address this issue is one of the main focus points of the LHS and it is explored further throughout the document.

2.3 Household Composition

2.3.1 Figure 2-3 below illustrates the projected changes in households by age groups from 2014 to 2039. The trend is towards ageing households and the greatest increase is in households with those aged 75+.

2.3.2 The population projections also show that the average household size is projected to continue to decrease. It is projected to decrease from 2.08 in 2014 to 1.79 in 2039.

2.3.3 Changes in household type between 2014 and 2039 are projected to occur as follows: 21% increase in ‘one adult’ households; 6% increase in ‘two adult’
households; a 41% decrease in ‘three or more adults and no children’ households (the highest decrease in Scotland); a 10% increase in ‘one adult plus one or more children’ households; and a 40% decrease in households containing ‘two or more adults plus one or more children’ (the highest decrease in Scotland). Figure 2-5 shows the number of households within each household type. The highest number is within the one adult house type and this is projected to continue to grow while the number of households with adults and children decreases.

Figure 2-5 Household Type Outer Hebrides 2014-2039

2.4 Housing Stock Profile Summary

2.4.1 Housing stock in the Islands is very closely linked to the crofting system, with the result that a large majority of dwellings have long been in private ownership, with a strong tradition of individual self-build projects.

2.4.2 This practice has resulted in a ‘home for life’ approach to housing provision and a tendency for people to stay within the same community all of their lives. It also means that building styles vary significantly and older properties can suffer from quality issues and also be difficult to modify as occupants’ needs change.

2.4.3 There is little by way of households progressing ‘up the property ladder’ as is the norm in more urban areas, or indeed, of downsizing once the family have left home. The tradition of the extended family caring for older or vulnerable relatives means that there has been no strong demand for either sheltered or other forms of supported housing.

2.4.4 Currently over 8 out of 10 households live in privately owned or rented housing and most of the housing stock consists of larger homes with 3 or more bedrooms.

2.4.5 There is no private sector sheltered housing and minimal speculative mainstream new build by developers.

2.4.6 The lack of accommodation options for those requiring specialist provision now needs to be addressed as the pattern of family caring changes and expectation of independent living opportunities increase.
2.4.7 Further detail on the composition and workings of the housing system is provided within the relevant chapter on each of the strategic priorities.

2.5 Tenure

2.5.1 The tenure breakdown across the Outer Hebrides is shown in Table 2-2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Market Area</th>
<th>Owner Occupied</th>
<th>Social Rented</th>
<th>Private Rented</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stornoway</td>
<td>3999</td>
<td>1230</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>5776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>5192</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>6800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9191 (73%)</td>
<td>2212 (18%)</td>
<td>858 (7%)</td>
<td>315 (3%)</td>
<td>12576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>2372777</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census 2011

2.5.2 This shows that 73% of properties are owner occupied in the Outer Hebrides, as compared to 62% for Scotland as a whole. However, there is a lower percentage of private rented housing in the Outer Hebrides than Scotland and this has reduced from 940 in 2001 to 858 in 2011. Social rented properties have increased slightly from 2140 in 2001 to 2212 (18%) in 2011 which is still below the national average of 24.3%.

2.5.3 Stornoway HMA has the highest rate of social renting at over 21%, reflecting the fact that nearly half of all social rented properties are located in this area.

2.5.4 Rates of economic activity are influenced by demographic characteristics of households in the Outer Hebrides as well as the economic status of heads of household. The Islands have a high number of retired persons at almost 42% of the population, while 54% are in employment. Only 1% of the population are unemployed and 2.8% are categorised as ‘other inactive’. 73.6% of households receive no benefits payments.

2.6 Housing Market Areas

2.6.1 It is important to think spatially about the way the Outer Hebrides housing markets operate in order to understand the relation between demand and supply. Travel to Work Areas (TTWA), as defined by the Office for National Statistics, are recommended as approximations of Housing Market Areas (HMA) (Local Housing System Good Practice Guide, O’Sullivan et al 2004). However, on that basis the whole of the Outer Hebrides island area is designated a single TTWA, which does not reflect reality when applied to Housing Markets.

2.6.2 Although in theory the Outer Hebrides could be considered a single HMA by virtue of having discrete geographic boundaries, in practice very few households move any significant distance within the TTWA to take up alternative accommodation without also changing employment. This is evidenced by discussions with local property agents on the origin of buyers, by analysis of the detail and volume of house transactions by area (largely derived from our in-house database) and of population numbers/changes. Together these provide evidence of how fragmented the HMA really is and at what geographies it is appropriate to divide it.

2.6.3 In the more dispersed geographies the numbers of house sales transactions and of households are too low to be considered as constituting separate HMAs.
2.6.4 In practice therefore, subsets of the HMA exist to a greater or lesser extent throughout the island chain and it is reasonable and appropriate to retain the concept of the housing system as a tiered model with smaller spatial areas operating within it.

2.6.5 Our HNDA process and this LHS are therefore based on two market areas, namely the Stornoway HMA (incorporating Broadbay but excluding Tolsta), and the Rural HMA area (the rest of Lewis and Harris, the Uists and Barra). More detail on this is available in the Outer Hebrides HNDA.

**Housing Market Areas Map**

2.7 Proposed Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan 2

2.7.1 The Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan Proposed Plan (referred to as ‘the Plan’) sets out a vision and spatial strategy for the development of land in the Outer Hebrides over the next 10-20 years. The Plan contains the land use planning policies which the Comhairle will use for determining planning applications as well as a number of development proposals for our settlements and rural areas. When it is formally adopted, the Local Development Plan 2 will replace the current Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan, and will provide the planning framework for the local authority area. Until then, the Proposed Plan may be a material planning consideration.

2.7.2 The Proposed Plan sets out the Comhairle’s land-use planning policies to facilitate sustainable economic growth in the Islands and ensures development is guided in a
way that creates successful, well-designed places and that our environmental,
historic and cultural resources are valued and managed in a sustainable way.

2.7.3 The Proposed Plan reflects local needs for a more flexible Development Strategy, but
retains an expectation for high design quality in areas outwith settlement. There is a
focus on housing supply, infrastructure, and design quality in new developments. The Proposed Plan also seeks to provide a framework for some of the challenges we face over the coming years such as: housing provision; climate change adaptation; and flooding.

2.7.4 The Plan is consistent with the National Planning Framework 3, Scottish Planning
Policy (SPP), and the Scottish Government Land Use Strategy. SPP indicates that
Plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of a plan
area in a way which is flexible to adapt to changing circumstances and supports
existing business sectors.

2.7.5 As with NPF3 (2014), SPP gives greater recognition to the distinct needs, aspirations
and capacity of rural, coastal and island areas, and this “island proofing” will be
applied to consideration of housing and other development policies and proposals
during the lifespan of the Plan and the LHS.

2.8 Design, Place-Making, and Sustainable Places

2.8.1 The Comhairle’s new Draft Development Plan notes that proposals which
incorporate place-making principles and design tools, and are well sited and
designed, will ensure good quality development that fits into its surroundings. The
siting and design of development is important in contributing to the quality and
sustainability of the environment within which we live and work and is also a practical
means of achieving a wide range of social, economic and environmental goals -
making settlements that can be both successful and sustainable. There are a
number of place-making and design factors that combine to shape a new
development and these form the basis of the Comhairle’s policy and contribute to
better place-making.

2.8.2 Development proposals will be determined taking into account their impact upon the
Scottish Government’s six qualities of a successful place: Distinctive; Safe and
Pleasant; Easy to Move Around; Welcoming; Adaptable; and Resource Efficient.

2.8.3 Development proposals must demonstrate a satisfactory quality of place-making,
siting, scale and design that respect and reflect positive local characteristics and will
complement or enhance the surrounding built and natural environment, while taking
account of the guidance contained within the Outer Hebrides Design Guide.

2.8.4 Proposals for new buildings will be permitted where they satisfy criteria relating to:
Siting; Design; Amenity Space; Topography; and Neighbour Amenity. In housing
development, consisting of four or more houses, integrated public spaces which
prioritise walking and cycling over vehicular movement and encourages active travel
may be required. Developers should provide details on the protection and
enhancement of existing functional open space and green networks, where
applicable, and other requirements which may be detailed in Supplementary
Guidance for specific housing sites.

2.8.5 The Outer Hebrides Design Guide seeks to help everyone considering building a
house to make informed decisions by recognising that every new dwelling brings a
permanent change to the landscape, and that by designing buildings which sit well in
the landscape, the distinctive character of the Islands can be preserved. The Guide
sits alongside Scottish Government Planning Advice Note 72 Housing in the
Countryside, and also relates to the Local Development Plan. It considers issues
such as location, siting, affordability and design, encourages sensitive innovation in
both traditional and contemporary style and provides information on gaining planning
permission, building warrants, etc. An Outer Hebrides Design Award competition is
run biennially, celebrating the most exceptional developments completed within the last two years. As well as Housing, awards are given for Business/Non-domestic and Conservation projects.

2.8.6 In relation to Town Centres, the National Planning Framework recognises Stornoway’s strategic location, economic potential, and role as a service centre to underpin the entire Outer Hebrides. Further, NPF3 states that many coastal and island communities have key towns, where development opportunities, employment, homes and services are often clustered. Plans for coastal and island areas should recognise the role of these towns as important focal points for investment and transport connections.

2.8.7 Scottish Planning Policy recognises that a network of centres conventionally found in other areas does not necessarily apply in an islands context and thus the application of a ‘town centre first’ policy approach in the Islands needs to be flexible. The Development Strategy does recognise the significance of Stornoway as a focus for activity whilst noting the need to facilitate social, commercial and retail activity throughout the Islands.

2.8.8 The ‘town centre first’ principle now also applies to promoting a town centre location to offices, community and cultural facilities and uses which attract significant numbers of people. The ‘town centre first’ policy is not intended to divert essential services and development away from rural areas. With support from Scottish Government, Scotland’s Towns Partnership undertook an audit of Stornoway town in 2016 and identified a strong independent retail environment and positive optimism amongst businesses. A number of Stornoway town centre sites have been identified as potential housing locations within the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP), and these will complement significant new housing provision achieved in recent years.

2.9 Land Supply

2.9.1 The proposed Plan highlights that Housing is a key development activity in the Islands, with 593 houses being completed in the last 5 years. It is important to help ensure there is sufficient land available for future provision, as determined through the Housing Need and Demand Assessment. The Plan has identified a limited number of housing sites which are safeguarded for the provision of affordable or mixed tenure housing development.

2.9.2 This is supplemented by a policy framework to best respond to the high incidence of individual self builds on ‘windfall’ sites which is characteristic of the Outer Hebrides. The LDP Housing Policy and Housing Proposal Sites have been informed by the draft Local Housing Strategy, the HNDA undertaken in 2016, and the 2015 Housing Land Audit which evidences the extent of house building on windfall sites.

2.9.3 The proposed new Development Plan and Housing Land Audit (now conducted biennially as appropriate to local circumstances and permitted by SPP) reflect the fact that over 70% of housing development occurs on private/windfall sites, which is hard to plan for spatially and is subject to a number of external parameters including land tenure, croft housing grants, etc. This will continue to be a significant and distinct characteristic of the local housing system. Identification of proposal sites helps address the demand, particularly to ensure the provision of affordable housing and an appropriate mix of tenure in the development of larger sites.
Table 2-3 Land Supply for Housing by Multi-Ward and Housing Market Area (HMA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>2015-2020</th>
<th>2020+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consented/Local Development Plan/SHIP/SHIP Shadow Supply</td>
<td>Projected Windfall</td>
<td>Total Effective Supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Barraigh, Bhatersaigh Eirisgeigh agus Uibhist a Deas Beinn na Faoghla agus Uibhist a Tuath Na Hearadh agus Ceann a Deas</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nan Loch Sgir Ulge agus Ceann a Tuath nan Loch</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>An Taobh Siar agus Nis</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rural HMA Sub Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sgire an Rubha</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Steornabhagh a Deas</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Steornabhagh a Tuath</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Loch a Tuath #</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stornoway HMA Sub Total</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# North Tolsta in Rural HMA
* Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP)

2.10 Density and Affordable Housing Ratios

2.10.1 The Local Development Plan also stipulates policy relating to housing density and for housing proposals of:

(a) 4 or more units, an appropriate housing density will be required as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Density by Area (see Policy 1)</th>
<th>Maximum Density</th>
<th>Minimum Density</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stornoway Core</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>25 units/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outwith the Core and in other Main Settlements</td>
<td>30 units/ha</td>
<td>15 units/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Rural Settlements</td>
<td>20 units/ha</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outwith Settlements</td>
<td>15 units/ha</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CnES Local Development Plan

(b) 8 or more units, a minimum of 25% affordable housing will be required unless otherwise determined in a planning brief;

(c) 15 units or more, an appropriate tenure mix will be sought in discussion with the developer (OHLDP November 2012)
2.11 Fuel Poverty and Climate Change

2.11.1 The Comhairle acknowledges the statutory duties imposed by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 in relation to fuel poverty, and those of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

2.11.2 The authority is currently preparing a new Carbon Management Plan (CM Plan) for the years 2017-2023. In the previous CM Plan published in 2013, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar stated its aspiration to achieve a reduction target of 20%, based on the 2009 carbon footprint baseline, by 2015. A number of factors have made this a challenging target, including: the complexity of the carbon management process; demands for new skills within, and time from, existing staff in the identification, planning, resourcing and tracking of carbon reduction projects/initiatives; a changing legislative and policy framework; and the changing nature of estate and building use, as well as an increasing energy intensiveness of the building stock. It should be noted that the Comhairle’s property estate does not include housing assets, following the ending of the landlord role in 2006.

2.11.3 The CM Plan sets out our ambitions for Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, and a roadmap for progress. Reducing carbon emissions is not just about our commitment to the environment. The same processes we use to identify carbon emissions reduction will also identify and realise financial savings through improved efficiency in the procurement and operation of our assets. The actions outlined within this Plan form part of our efficiency plan to reduce consumption and provide value for money.

2.11.4 The 2016 carbon footprint was calculated to be 17,196 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) and covered electricity, gas/LPG, gas oil consumption, transport (fleet), water, wastewater consumption and waste.

2.11.5 Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has therefore decided to reset its baseline to 2016 and target a 9.87% reduction to its total annual carbon footprint by the end of financial year 2023. This continues the aspiration of a 42% reduction but based upon the 2009 footprint and to be delivered by 2023. This equates to a figure of 15,499 tonnes CO₂ emissions in 2023. The 2016 baseline this time includes staff travel via mileage claims and mileage derived from the use of fleet cars.

2.11.6 The Comhairle’s proposed Development Plan recognises that climate change is a significant issue and that Scotland is leading the UK with reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Planning legislation states that all local authorities in their Local Development Plans must seek to reduce carbon emissions through the use of low and zero carbon generating technologies (LZCGT) in all new building developments. This will contribute to meeting the Scottish Government’s CO₂ emission reduction targets and Building Standards Energy and Sustainability requirements.

2.11.7 The principle of sustainability is embedded within Planning and Building Standards, through the concept of Sustainability Labelling which aims to reward the achievement of either meeting or exceeding building standards and opting to meet higher levels in terms of energy and carbon emissions targets as well as water efficiency and flexibility in design.

2.11.8 Local policy therefore looks to promote the expansion of Zero and Low Carbon Buildings, and all planning applications for new buildings must demonstrate that the carbon dioxide emissions reduction target as required by Scottish Building Standards has been met with at least 15% of this target being met through the use of low or zero carbon technology. Compliance with this policy shall be demonstrated through obtaining an ‘active’ sustainability label through Building
Standards and submission of calculations indicating the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP), Dwelling Emissions Rate (DER) or SBEM Buildings Emissions Rate (BER) with and without the use of the LZCGT.

2.11.9 This policy will be applied to new housing developments as appropriate throughout the life of the LHS, but it is not straightforward to assess the impact of energy saving works on existing housing, given the tenure characteristics of the Islands.

2.11.10 The local approach to fuel poverty and energy efficiency in housing is considered further in Chapter 3 and the Fuel Poverty Action Plan sets out a range of tasks to address issues.
### Key Issues from HNDA Influencing LHS Direction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LHS &amp; Development Plan</th>
<th>Key Housing Market Drivers - Key Issues Identified in the HNDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Demographic issues for the local housing market** | 1. Declining population  
2. Increasing number of elderly people  
3. Younger people moving away  
4. Smaller households  
5. Declining population in remote rural areas  
6. Large number of bigger properties with only one person  
7. Population drift towards Stornoway |
| **Affordability issues for the local housing market** | 1. Housing market: significant number of properties not moving off the market  
2. Larger, high value properties appearing on market due to decline in Oil Industry  
3. Difficulty obtaining mortgage deposits  
4. Continued interest in Shared Equity properties  
5. OMSE Thresholds too low to meet SE demand |
| **Economic issues for the local housing market** | 1. Lower price properties are generating local housing market activity  
2. Reliance on Public Sector as main employer  
3. Lower than average Income levels  
4. Significant Self-employed numbers |
CHAPTER 3

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

HOUSING QUALITY: Communities are sustained and re-vitalised through improvements to housing quality, condition, and energy efficiency

This chapter informs on the quality of the housing stock across all tenures, sets out current challenges and how the Comhairle and partners can address these over the lifespan of the LHS. It also emphasises how efforts to ensure our communities live in good quality housing can potentially positively impact on other corporate ambitions to reverse population decline and the demographic imbalance, and the health and social care agenda to extend independent living and care at home for as long as possible.

3.1 Progress in Addressing Housing Quality 2011-2016

1. Reduction in number of BTS houses - (achieved)
2. Assist 1000 vulnerable households to minimise fuel costs - (achieved)
3. Ensure all social housing meets SHQS by 2015 - (achieved for all eligible properties)
4. Assist 850 older/vulnerable households to live in properties free from serious disrepair and meet tolerable standard - (partially achieved)
5. Promote new carbon efficient housing development to meet overall supply - (achieved)

WHERE WE ARE NOW

3.2 Private Sector

3.2.1 The Outer Hebrides has a very unique stock profile with owner-occupation being the predominant tenure. The large percentage of owner-occupation (73.0%) is due to
the crofting landholding system in the Islands where dwellings are single family units and have been in private ownership for many years. Shared housing or Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are mainly for specialist residential accommodation and are not significant in number. There were 30 HMOs recorded in the 2016 Housing Statistical Annual Return but only 4 let as ordinary residential dwellings.

3.2.2 The local PSHCS undertaken in 2016 found that there were 21,892 persons within 10,450 private households, which are mostly small in composition, i.e. 76% of those households contain 1 or 2 persons only. In terms of the age profile, the average age of the population was 48 years of age with 42.6% heads of household aged 65+. 9,055 households (86.5%) under-occupy their home and have at least one bedroom surplus, while only 1.7% have insufficient bedrooms to meet family needs and are overcrowded.

3.2.3 From the late 1970’s, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar provided a comprehensive house improvement and repair grant scheme which resulted in significant improvement to the private sector housing stock throughout the Islands.

3.2.4 The Comhairle scheme was targeted at properties on non-croft land or on a feu, and acknowledged that the long tradition of self-build on family owned croft land meant houses could be of relatively poor construction, and that many were built over a long period of time without any form of external borrowing. It also recognised the low incomes of many island householders which limited access to loan finance. However, changes in legislation and subsequent reductions in financial resources have seen this scheme effectively phased out over recent years. A separate scheme was administered by the (then) Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for homes in crofting tenure.

3.3 Scheme of Assistance - Current Terms and Assessment of Implications

3.3.1 At the time of preparing the Comhairle’s last LHS 2011 - 2016, the new Scheme of Assistance (SoA) for Private Sector housing had just been introduced (in April 2010). This Scheme, aimed at replacing the previous Improvement and Repair Scheme, came about from the 2006 Housing (Scotland) Act and brought about a number of significant changes to the way assistance was provided to homeowners.

3.3.2 These legislative changes have significantly changed the way the Comhairle is able to deal with the condition of the housing stock throughout the Outer Hebrides. The emphasis is now on private owners to be responsible and pro-active regarding their properties and on using their own resources to deal with repair, improvements and maintenance, with the Comhairle’s primary role being that of providing information and advice, with practical and financial assistance only provided in exceptional circumstances.

3.3.3 The only area unchanged by the legislation was in relation to medical adaptations, with grants for carrying out works to enable people to remain in their home, such as stair lifts and wet rooms, continuing to be mandatory.

3.3.4 The funding ring-fence for Improvement and Repair Grants was also removed in 2010 through implementation of the 2006 Act. Although funding still came from the Scottish Government, it was now part of the Comhairle’s overall Settlement and it was up to each Council to determine how this was allocated in the face of competing priorities. The Comhairle made a policy decision not to designate Housing Renewal Areas on the grounds that housing density across the Islands make these irrelevant.

3.3.5 The Comhairle’s SoA now concentrates on essential adaptations for the disabled, Below Tolerable Standard (BTS) properties, and energy efficiency measures. Most persons considering works outwith these priorities are offered information and advice only. The Scheme does include provision for financial assistance where
strategic objectives are met, for example, to assist the elderly and people on low incomes.

3.3.6 The grant support element of the SoA had four main components:

- **Major Adaptations:** for the provision of medical adaptations to a person’s home to assist independent living. Adaptations included stair-lifts, walk-in showers, and access ramping. Major adaptations are mandatory, with the specification being determined by the NHS Western Isles Occupational Therapy Department and the actual works being delivered through the local Care and Repair Scheme.

- **Small Repairs:** for the provision of low level aids and adaptations, such as grab rails, which are required at short notice. Small Repairs are funded by the Comhairle but determined and delivered by the OT Department.

- **BTS Housing:** to assist with the improvement of houses failing the Tolerable Standard for households not having their own resources. This is targeted at a small number of cases each year.

- **Minor Works Scheme:** to provide partial financial assistance primarily to pensioner households to deal with minor works on a property, such as replacement of an external door, or chimney breast repairs. The homeowner pays for materials and Minor Works pays for the labour. The Scheme is delivered by the local Care and Repair Service.

3.3.7 Over the period of the LHS 2011-2016 the BTS element of the SoA had very limited take up, mainly due to the reduced levels of grant support available and owners’ inability or unwillingness to use their own resources to cover the balance of costs.

3.3.8 The main source of funding for the SoA came through the Comhairle’s Capital Programme. The most recent Capital Programme was set in 2013 and originally allocated £3m towards SoA works over the five year period of the Programme.

3.3.9 The Comhairle subsequently approved two ‘top-ups’ of funding, coming from other Housing resources, and this provided an additional £795k for the SoA. The original Capital allocation and the current budget allocation are shown below.

3.3.10 Actual spend on the Capital Programme matched the budgets very closely. There is no doubt that demand much outstripped supply and prioritisation of applications for financial assistance was problematic. This imbalance is likely to become more acute given the demographic projections for the Outer Hebrides.

### Table 3-1 Original Capital Programme (2013)

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<th>2013/14</th>
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<td>350k</td>
<td>325k</td>
<td>300k</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Minor Works (TIG)</td>
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### Table 3-2 Capital Programme (as at May 2017)

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013/14</th>
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<th>2015/16</th>
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<td>975k</td>
<td>750k</td>
<td>570k</td>
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#### 3.4 Private Sector House Condition Survey

**3.4.1** During 2016, the Comhairle carried out a comprehensive Private Sector House Condition Survey in order to obtain an independent assessment of current property condition and provide an insight into the implications of the changed grant funding regime. The survey was geographically stratified across the whole of the Outer Hebrides and examined 10% of the private housing stock. This equates to just less than 1200 private properties and included owner-occupied dwellings, private rented properties and vacant houses. The Survey was designed and implemented according to Scottish Government guidelines although tempered to take account of the particular characteristics of the Outer Hebrides housing market and local objectives.

**3.4.2** Along with an analysis of the building fabric and condition a householder survey was also carried out to gather information on energy efficiency as well as an analysis of the characteristics and attitudes of the householders themselves regarding their housing situation and their community.

**3.4.3** The survey findings are summarised below and further details of the survey can be provided on request.

#### 3.5 Housing Condition

**3.5.1** The Comhairle’s survey showed that of the occupied private housing stock 2,035 dwellings (19.5%) are estimated to be in sub-standard condition according to Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 definitions with poor housing conditions impacting in particular on the elderly and economically disadvantaged.

**3.5.2** 344 dwellings (3.3%) are now found to be Below Tolerable Standard (BTS), only slightly above the national average. The last LHS 2011-16 had a strong focus on alleviating BTS and it is encouraging that this has reduced by over 6% due to financial assistance being directed at our most vulnerable homeowners.

**3.5.3** The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 defines sub-standard dwellings as those that are:
- Below Tolerable Standard
- In a state of serious disrepair (extensive repairs)
- In need of repair and likely to deteriorate rapidly (urgent repairs)

**3.5.4** Many houses in the Outer Hebrides, although achieving the minimum standard acceptable, are still in sub-standard condition.
787 dwellings (7.5%) are considered to require extensive repairs while 1,506 dwellings (14.4%) are considered to be in need of urgent repairs.

3.5.5 The Comhairle’s survey found that a very high percentage (75%) of dwellings fail the requirements of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS), mainly due to energy efficiency, health and safety, and security matters.

3.5.6 Costs to address this disrepair within the housing stock have been estimated at £5.4M while comprehensive works to ensure 10 year dwelling life have been calculated at approximately £187M.

3.5.7 Improving and maintaining existing homes and communities is essential in making the Outer Hebrides a place where people want to live and work, but the survey found that there is a bias towards younger and older households within the sub-standard stock and predictably regarding those who are economically disadvantaged including many retired householders, the unemployed and those receiving benefits.

3.5.8 Although the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS), which was used for the PSHCS, is a non-statutory measure within the private sector, it is a valuable indicator of housing quality. The main areas of failure within the stock were found to be energy efficiency and health/safety/security issues with higher rates of non-compliance in pre-war housing, within rural Lewis and Harris, and in the private rented sector. The average energy efficiency rating was 49, significantly below the current Scottish average SAP rating of 62.

3.5.9 With regard to disrepair of properties, 53% were found to require localised or minor repairs only. However, such repairs are a symptom of the lack of routine maintenance rather than deterioration of the dwelling fabric. Extensive and urgent repairs affect 7.5% and 12.5% of dwellings respectively and further postponement of works, although predominantly minor at this stage, will have future implications for wind and weatherproofing and the health, safety and comfort of occupants. The occurrence of issues requiring urgent repairs is significantly higher in Rural Lewis and Harris.

3.5.10 While a person’s needs change at different stages of their lives, a safe, warm and secure home is a constant requirement. The Comhairle will use the detailed evidence from the PSHCS to build on the achievements of the last LHS, and through continued partnership working and seeking external funding when possible, target future activity to ensure that the stock’s fabric and energy efficiency is adequately robust going forward.

3.5.11 Clearly, increased funding levels are required if housing quality is to meaningfully influence wider community agendas.

3.6 Private Rented Sector

3.6.1 According to the PSHCS, within the Outer Hebrides there is a 10.8% private rented presence, amounting to 1,376 dwellings. This figure is well below the national Scottish profile of 20.3%. The Private Rented Sector (PRS) never the less plays an important role in the housing system, helping to meet increasing demand while providing a flexible tenure option both in the short and long-term, at various stages of tenants’ lives, and as needs and demands change. It is important that the sector continues to grow and develop and is able to respond effectively to changing demand. We need therefore to ensure that the PRS is well managed and of good quality and it is an aspiration of this LHS to make renewed efforts to develop the sector.

3.6.2 There are currently 700 landlords approved by the Comhairle to let property and registered with the Scottish Government’s Landlord Register. This lower figure is due to legislative exemptions where those who let under a crofting tenancy to family members or let part of their home to a lodger are not required to apply for
registration. The recent PSHCS returns confirmed this, indicating higher rates of private rental than those currently on Comhairle databases. Very few landlords have more than a single property for let. These characteristics account for the lack of any forum through which the Comhairle can address impacting issues such as empty homes and quality standards, and also make for a general lack of interest amongst landlords to become involved in any collective activity.

3.6.3 Many PRS dwellings in the Islands have an older housing age profile and almost 29% of those fail the Repairing Standard due to general disrepair and fire detection issues. The two key areas of failure on the Repairing Standard are wind and weather-tight issues and fire detection. Given current financial constraints and the removal of subsidised grants addressing this will be challenging and options limited.

3.6.4 Over half of all tenants in the Outer Hebrides are not familiar with the Repairing Standard, which covers the legal and contractual obligations of private landlords, nor the presence of the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber) which performs the functions which used to be carried out by the Private Rented Housing Panel. However, satisfaction in the sector is generally very high: 89% of private rented tenants are satisfied with their landlord.

3.6.5 The 2011 Census revealed that out of the total of 1,173 private rental properties 46% were within the Stornoway HMA while 53% were in the Rural HMA.

Within island areas the percentage of properties in the private rented sector were as follows:

- Barra & Vatersay 5.3%
- South Uist 7.3%
- Benbecula 6.6%
- North Uist 6.1%
- Harris 6.6%
- Rural Lewis 21.4%

3.7 Social Rented Sector

3.7.1 There are currently 2225 social rented dwellings throughout the Islands which are managed and maintained by HHP, the only mainstream social landlord in the Outer Hebrides. This sector is currently the main means of meeting affordable housing need in the Islands. Trust Housing Association (THA) own and manage a further 62 social housing units which provide sheltered housing in Stornoway Town Centre.

3.7.2 Stornoway HMA has the highest rate of social renting at over 21%, reflecting the fact that nearly half of all social rented properties are located in this area.

3.7.3 All registered social landlords had to ensure that their stock meets the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by the end of 2015. Trust HA fulfilled their obligation and in relation to HHP stock the Standard was met for the majority of
properties although 350 exemptions and 144 abeyances were granted by the Scottish Housing Regulator. The exemptions mainly relate to the life expectancy of heating systems which would make the cost of their replacement excessive. Abeyances primarily relate to work to flatted properties where not all owners were agreeable to the work required being undertaken. HHP has plans in place through a 4 year Investment Programme which commenced in April 2015 to deliver the new Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH). SHQS exemptions and abeyances will continue to be addressed over the same period as part of this investment.

3.8 Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency

3.8.1 According to the Scottish Fuel Poverty Statement (FPS) published in 2002 “a household is in fuel poverty if it would be required to spend more than 10% of its income (including housing benefit or income support for mortgage interest) on all household fuel use”. Extreme Fuel Poverty is defined as a household having to spend more than 20% of its income on domestic fuel.

3.8.2 The Comhairle’s PSCHS reaffirms that rates of fuel poverty are high in the Outer Hebrides in comparison with Scotland as a whole, although there is emerging evidence that progress is being made in tackling local levels of fuel poverty. The 2016 Scottish House Condition Survey estimated that 58% of households in the Outer Hebrides were in fuel poverty, a decline of 4% on the previous year’s figures. Nationally, the figure has fallen from 35% to 31%.

3.8.3 The local survey concluded that 6,205 private sector households (59.4%) are in fuel poverty and 2,199 households (21.0%) are in extreme fuel poverty, which is significantly above the national average. The Scottish figures are 34% and 9.5% respectively. It was found that 23% of households only just manage to afford to heat their homes in winter and 8.1% experience difficulty in meeting the cost. It is estimated that fuel poverty in the Outer Hebrides was most prevalent in:

Owner-Occupied Houses: 59% of owner-occupiers were estimated to be in fuel poverty and 67% of the private sector failed the SHQS energy efficiency standard.

Lower Council Tax Banded Homes: It is estimated that 72% of private households banded A-C for Council Tax purposes are in fuel poverty.

Under-Occupied Properties: 85% of private homes have excess bedrooms than household requirements and many (44%) are occupied by single pensioners.

Single Pensioner Households: 93.1% were estimated to be in fuel poverty.

Older Properties: 62% of households in pre-1982 housing were in fuel poverty compared to 37% of those in properties built after 1982.

Remote Properties: Rural Lewis and Harris in particular were areas where 69% of households were more likely to experience fuel poverty compared to 55.1% in Stornoway.

Detached and Semi-Detached: 62% of households in detached or semi-detached properties were in Fuel Poverty compared to 49% in terraced properties.

3.8.4 In the social housing sector fuel poverty and poverty in the broadest sense is a major concern for the HHP Board, as their tenants are amongst those most at risk from increased prices and reducing financial support from Government. Their current Business Plan reflects the importance of tackling fuel poverty and assisting the most economically vulnerable, particularly the elderly and households with
young children, to live in a warm home at affordable cost. Improving the thermal performance of HHP’s stock is an important contributor to the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership outcomes in tackling fuel poverty.

3.8.5 The primary causes of Fuel Poverty are: poor energy efficiency; high fuel costs; and low incomes (The Fuel Poverty Triangle) and the Outer Hebrides are severely impacted on all three dimensions.

**Poor Energy Efficiency:** Many island homes are large, inefficient buildings with 40% of homes built before 1950. 23% of homes are of solid wall construction, extremely difficult to treat with energy efficiency measures, and a further 20% are of mixed construction, for example, a solid wall home with cavity wall extension. The current Scottish average for energy efficiency is an EPC rating of 62 while the majority of properties in the Outer Hebrides currently have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of only 49 and lie between Bands D and E.

**High Fuel Costs and Usage:** As a result of peripherality and our position at the end of the supply chain, fuel costs in the islands are significantly higher than on the mainland. 66% of island householders spend over £1,500 on fuel per annum with 42% spending more than £2,000 per annum. The type of fuel used seems to make little difference to these statistics. There is a very limited mains gas supply, which is the most common type of heating in most other areas of Scotland; a very high number of households have never changed their energy provider; a quarter of households are unable to use a computer on the internet; and only 42% use direct debit, the cheapest form of payment.

**Low Incomes:** Whilst employment levels are high, the average net household income is low, estimated at an average of £19,201 per annum, against the Scottish figure of £25,300. The average income for households living in sub-standard housing is even lower, at an estimated at £17,985.

**Towards a Solution**

3.8.6 A partnership approach to fuel poverty is essential and the Outer Hebrides Fuel Poverty Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025 is effectively an integral part of this LHS. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is working closely with: a) TIG, the local housing agency for the Outer Hebrides which manages delivery of the Home Energy Efficiency Programmes Scotland (HEEPS) scheme through its Tigh Blath subsidiary; b) The Energy Advisory Service (TEAS) which provides an energy advice service to the local community, along with training and awareness raising; c) Home Energy Scotland (HES) which employs a local representative working on Fuel Poverty issues; d) Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP), the Registered Social Landlord for the Outer Hebrides; e) the Outer Hebrides Energy Efficiency and Advisory Forum which enables information sharing and good practice exchange among local community landlords; and, f) The Scottish Government which provides support and assistance to all the above organisations. Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE), as the main economic development agency, has responsibility for overall economic matters such as addressing low incomes and achieving on the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership’s targets around solidarity and cohesion outlined in the inter-agency ‘Creating Communities of the Future’ (CCoF) economic strategy.

3.8.7 The CCoF Strategy outlines the potential to impact on low incomes through targeted investment in key sectors. The Strategy identifies key areas of investment and sets out some critical solidarity targets for 2020.

3.8.8 The Comhairle is currently leading on proposals to form an Outer Hebrides Energy Supply Company (ESCO). The long term objective of this initiative is to facilitate the community purchase of a significant level of commercial onshore wind electricity generation with a view to retailing this electricity to the local community. As far as
possible, within constraints laid down by UK Regulator, the Office of the Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM), it is hoped that this initiative will result in competitive tariffs for locally produced and distributed electricity.

3.8.9 Related to the ESCO initiative is the implementation of a programme of smart metering. In view of the fact that Onshore Wind generation will be intermittent, smart metering will be essential to match demand to supply in the home.

3.8.10 As it develops towards this ultimate objective, the ESCO may be able to facilitate bulk access to cheaper tariffs for island homes, resulting in lower fuel prices and a modest amelioration of the Fuel Poverty situation.

3.8.11 The OHCPP Welfare Reform and Poverty Officers Group have been working together to deliver support for those affected by welfare reforms and facing poverty. This has included awareness raising campaigns in relation to the changes to the welfare system for both the public and frontline practitioners; delivery of a survival guide which highlights where people can access crisis support; supporting people to access food, meals and furniture when in crisis; and ensuring people have access to benefits and tenants advice and support with tribunals.

3.8.12 The OHCPP employability partnership offers a wide range of training programmes and routes into employment, particularly for those aged 16-25. As a consequence, youth unemployment figures are below the national average, although out-migration has an impact on these figures.

3.8.13 Our target is that by 2025, the official fuel poverty levels for the Outer Hebrides will have reduced to be in line with the Scottish national average. Beyond this, our aspiration is to seek to eliminate fuel poverty in the Outer Hebrides.

3.8.14 As noted above, The Energy Advisory Service (TEAS) is delivered by TIG, the local Housing Agency. TEAS provides an energy advice service to the local community, along with training to individuals and community groups, with a view to improving the awareness of energy efficiency matters. The Comhairle has supported TEAS with grant funding since it was established in 1994.

3.8.15 The 2016/17 Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland (HEEPS) was delivered throughout the area by TIG. The total funding available for the Programme was £1.418m, made up of £1.178m of Scottish Government grant and £0.240m of Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funds. During 2016/17, HEEPS delivered 350 energy efficiency measures, focussed mainly on Internal Wall Insulation and Room-in-Roof insulation.

3.8.16 Since 2013 (and projected to March 2018), a total of £9.5m will have been invested in home energy works, with an additional £2.5m ECO funding factored in.

3.8.17 The Scottish Government is also consulting on its draft Energy Strategy and its draft Fuel Poverty Strategy, seeking views on its vision for future energy use and carbon emission targets. With the Scottish Government designating energy efficiency as a priority, it will be replacing HEEPS with Scotland’s Energy Efficiency Programme (SEEP), a 15-20 year scheme investing in new and innovative approaches to improve energy efficiency.

3.8.18 The current priority areas of activity within the Fuel Poverty Action Plan are:

- **Support for Switching Supplier** - it was agreed to add the provision of advice and information on switching energy supplier to the Action Plan. As a result, TIG has commissioned an online switching platform that can be
accessed by local customers, and used by TIG when providing information and advice to consumers. Commitment has been made by other partners to support TIG in raising local awareness of this platform when it is up and running.

- **‘Warm and Well Western Isles’** - the Comhairle’s ESF Social Inclusion bid was successful and includes fuel poverty elements which will be delivered through TIG under its ‘Warm and Well Western Isles’ project. This has allocated an extra £80k up to December 2018 to provide fuel poverty advice and guidance to householders. Activities will include: energy advice to vulnerable householders through energy home visits; advice on installing heating systems in homes whose residents have long term health issues; advice on basic measures such as energy efficient appliances; increasing knowledge and understanding of fuel poverty and energy efficiency through education for key groups and the agencies which support them; and providing advice on switching to help reduce utility bills for consumers.

- **LED Communities** - TIG has now expanded its successful ‘LED Communities’ project to cover the Galson Estate and Carloway Estate areas on the West coast of Lewis. The project offers up to 14 free LED lightbulbs to every household, along with a home energy visit and advice.

- **Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland Update** - the Comhairle’s Home Energy Efficiency Programme: Area Based Schemes (HEEPS: ABS) for 2017/18 is progressing well. The funding available for 2017/18 is £1.33m of Scottish Government funding, supported by an estimated £238k of Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding. This will see just fewer than 400 measures delivered to 310 private sector homes by the end of the financial year. As in previous years, TIG has been appointed as Managing Agent to deliver HEEPS in the Outer Hebrides. Since 2013/14, HEEPS has provided almost £9m of Scottish Government funding to assist homeowners with energy efficiency measures. HEEPS has also had a positive impact on the overall condition of the private sector housing stock and has contributed towards addressing BTS issues.

- **Hebrides Energy** - following a second procurement exercise, Hebrides Energy is now in discussion with licensed electricity supplier ‘Our Power’ regarding a potential partnership to deliver a community tariff in the Outer Hebrides. The Comhairle is also now in dialogue with Orkney, Shetland and Highland Councils who are all looking at similar opportunities. Hebrides Energy CIC is starting to look more proactively at shared ownership opportunities as a way to impact on electricity bills in the longer term.

3.8.19 The availability and successful accessing of external funding is crucial to facilitate works which address energy efficiency deficiencies and potentially reduce fuel poverty and improve housing quality, and the continued partnership approach will be a priority during the life of this LHS.

3.8.20 Lobbying of Government Ministers will continue in an effort to lower fuel prices in the Outer Hebrides. Significant progress has been made in the reduction of road fuel prices and attention will now focus on the achievement of competitive prices for heating oil. This will have a significant impact on the Fuel Poverty situation in the islands as 40% of island homes are heated through heating oil delivered by road tanker. A critical part of this will be to identify what resources are required, and where, in order to achieve the most significant impact, and to be able to influence future investment priorities and allocations.
3.8.21 The multi-agency Fuel Poverty Action Group ensure a holistic, integrated approach as the Comhairle and partners work together to support the implementation of the Strategy. The Action Plan is regularly monitored and reported on through the Comhairle Committee system.

3.8.22 Given the nature of housing tenure in the Islands, it is very difficult to measure the impact of housing related fuel poverty and energy saving initiatives on climate change ambitions. However, the Comhairle’s activities relating to carbon saving are outlined in Chapter 2 and in relation to Development Plan policies.

3.9 Private Sector Household Characteristics

3.9.1 Attitudes to housing circumstances and local areas in the Outer Hebrides are mainly positive, according to the PSHCS, with 66.6% feeling very satisfied with their current accommodation. In terms of their local neighbourhood 70.7% feel very satisfied with the area in which they live and a further 27.7% feel quite satisfied. Perceptions of improvement in areas were felt stronger in the Stornoway area owner-occupied sector, while perceptions of decline were greater in the South Uist/Barra area. However, the view that there was some decline was shared by under 7% of the private sector population as a whole.

3.9.2 31.5% of owner-occupied households have completed major repairs or improvements to their dwellings over the last five years. However, only 15.3% intend to carry out future improvements in the next five years. Barriers to improvement include finding value for money contractors and advice on finance.

3.9.3 71% of owner-occupiers have no mortgage commitments but only 8.8% would consider re-mortgaging to repair or improve their home.

3.9.4 1,327 households (12.7%) have at least one household member affected by a limiting long-term illness or disability and 84.8% of those have mobility problems within their existing dwelling. Of those households, 45.8% live in adapted dwellings while the remaining number live in households which have not been adapted.

3.10 Challenges Identified

3.10.1 There is a clear need in the Islands to improve the condition of the private sector housing stock and the evidence gathered from the recent Private Sector House Condition Survey reflects this. The relatively low equity in house values and lower incomes compared to the national average, which reduces many owners’ ability to borrow to fund repairs and maintain their property, exacerbates the situation.

3.10.2 The table below summarises the issues we face.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significant level and varying degrees of private sector property disrepair – long term could have implications for provision of care at home services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance / inability of home owners to raise own finance for repair / improvement works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor energy efficiency levels in private stock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty achieving SHQS in some HHP stock, particularly in relation to energy efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing high levels of fuel poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No dedicated advice / information resource for house maintenance / repair / energy efficiency and related financial matters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.11 What We Intend to Do

Communities are Sustained and Re-vitalised through Improvements to Housing Quality, Condition, and Energy Efficiency

3.11.1 There is an important link to be made between housing quality and the developing agenda to promote population retention and improved age profiles, to regenerate and sustain our rural communities through the expansion of educational and employment opportunities, and to support the Health and Social Care aspirations relating to Care at Home and Independent Living.

3.11.2 One of the major obstacles to improving housing quality is the absence of general grant funding for improvement and repair, and the estimated costs of addressing current needs as evidenced by the PSHCS are substantial. If national funding sources remain unchanged it is likely that only very limited resources will be available for such works in the coming years. Financial assistance will of necessity be prioritised to mandatory adaptation grant applications, and the future demographic dictates that demand for these works will certainly increase.

3.11.3 The Comhairle will therefore investigate and encourage opportunities for home owners to take out equity release in their property for repair and maintenance purposes but will also consider the potential to re-introduce a level of targeted improvement and repair grants should the financial climate improve - for example, through the hoped for ‘Island Deal’ or other future funding associated to the developing population initiative.

3.11.4 The table below sets out actions derived from the consultation exercise and other evidence sources which will facilitate achievement of the strategic outcome. They will also satisfy requirements regarding the National Housing and Regeneration Outcomes. Specifically, they support “High Quality Sustainable Homes” and “Sustainable Communities” and will also influence the other two - “A Well-Functioning Housing System” and “Homes That Meet People’s Needs”.

Potential Actions

- consider reinstatement of targeted grant assistance for private sector properties.
- consider targeting grants at empty houses and linking with population initiatives.
- continue partnership approach to maximising resources for fuel poverty/energy efficiency measures across all housing tenures within the wider Fuel Poverty Action Plan.
- contribute to development of local energy supply company.
- increase investment in services to assist the care at home agenda.
- continue support for achieving single housing funding resource through “Our Islands Our Futures “.
- develop “one stop shop” for advice and information on housing repair and maintenance, energy efficiency, home safety and related financial issues.
CHAPTER 4

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 - HOUSING SUPPLY

Housing supply is sufficient to support people’s needs and aspirations and assist wider corporate aims

This chapter informs on the supply of housing stock across all tenures, sets out current challenges, and how the Comhairle and partners can address these over the lifespan of the LHS. It also recognises that efforts to ensure our communities have access to sufficient and appropriate accommodation can potentially positively impact on other corporate ambitions to reverse population decline and the demographic imbalance, as well as the health and social care agenda to extend independent living and care at home for as long as possible.

Consideration of new housing supply takes into account the Comhairle’s policies on Design, Place-Making and Sustainable Places, and information on these is provided in Chapter 2 relating to the Local Development Plan.

The Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2018/19 to 2022/23 reflects the Comhairle’s aspirations, as approved in September 2017, that new affordable housing should be provided on a ratio of 55% in rural areas and 45% in the Stornoway HMA in support of the population and regeneration agendas.

Throughout the lifespan of the LHS, the intended activity specifically supports National Outcomes relating to: “A Well-Functioning Housing System”; “High Quality Sustainable Homes” and “Homes That Meet People’s Needs”. In turn, these will influence the outcome regarding “Sustainable Communities”.

Ceann an Ora, Isle of Harris
4.1 Progress with Increasing Housing Supply 2011-2016

4.1.1 In the Comhairle’s last LHS, the Theme relating to Supply was “the balance between housing supply and demand is improved so that more households can secure a suitable home in their preferred area at a price they can afford”. There were five indicators associated with this Theme, two relating to affordable housing, two to allocations, and one to all tenure house construction.

4.1.2 In terms of the two Indicators relating to new affordable houses, 143 units were completed (92 in the Stornoway HMA and 51 in the Rural HMA). The original target set out in 2011 was for 180 units. In the review of performance against targets, the indicators relating to new affordable homes were both classed as having “partially” met the target.

4.1.3 The 2011-16 Housing Development Programme was slow to start, largely due to on-going discussion at national level to negotiate changes to the SG Guidance, in order to make development programmes more manageable.

4.1.4 There has been a steady decline in new builds and a distinct lack of speculative housing developments in the Outer Hebrides. It is now very challenging for young people to self-build due to more constrained, risk-averse mortgage lending and the additional rigorous checks required. Of those who have approached estate agents/IFAs after initially considering self-build, the view held has been that there are now too many obstacles, regulations and paperwork involved, along with the requirement for a Project Manager/Project Engineer in order to secure a loan, which adds to further expense.

4.1.5 Two Indicators relating to HHP allocations were achieved and an Indicator relating to the construction of all new houses was also achieved.

4.2 Where We Are Now

4.2.1 As already highlighted, there are significant social and economic challenges arising from the location and geography of the islands as well as issues of depopulation and
demographic imbalance and the vulnerability of the economy. All of these in turn impact on the nature of the local housing markets.

4.2.2 There were a total of 14,577 dwellings in the Outer Hebrides in 2015, an increase of 6.6% since 2005, and an estimated total population of 27,070. Approximately 30% of the population (6,200) live in Stornoway, the only large town in the Outer Hebrides, with the rest of the population spread throughout 280 townships.

4.2.3 The Outer Hebrides has a unique stock profile with owner-occupation being the predominant tenure. The large percentage of owner-occupation (89.2%) is due to the crofting landholding system in the Islands where dwellings are single family units and have been in private ownership for many years. Shared housing or Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are mainly for specialist residential accommodation and are not significant in number.

4.2.4 There are 2225 social rented dwellings throughout the Islands which are managed and maintained by HHP, the largest social landlord in the Outer Hebrides. Trust Housing Association (THA) own and manage another 62 social housing units which provide sheltered housing in two Stornoway town centre locations.

4.2.5 There are approximately 12,768 private sector residential dwellings with a population of 21,892 persons.

4.2.6 The Comhairle has approximately 700 Registered Private Landlords in the Outer Hebrides. The majority of private landlords only have one property to rent (in most cases an old family home), with only a few landlords renting out two or more properties. Croft house owners are not required to register, but it is estimated that a further 400 croft houses as used for private rent, giving a total of 1,100 properties.

4.2.7 The private sector stock mainly consists of large detached 2-storey dwellings and bungalows, 70% of which were built after the Second World War, and comprises very few semi-detached, terraced or tenement properties. This impacts significantly on energy efficiency attainment and a large percentage of occupied private dwellings are SHQS non-compliant for this reason with 22.8% in need of either urgent or major repairs. The main SHQS failures in occupied properties are due to energy efficiency. Over time there could be an increase in demand for newer properties if the deficiencies are not addressed. These issues are considered further in the Housing Quality Chapter.

4.3 Social Rented Sector

4.3.1 The defining feature of the local Social Rented Sector is that there is only one mainstream general needs RSL in the area. HHP was established in 2006 as a result of the Comhairle’s Stock Transfer process. Overall, having only one RSL in the area has not had a detrimental impact on housing need and demand as tenure preference continues to favour home ownership.

4.3.2 HHP maintains the single General Needs Waiting List for the Islands and is also the main developer of affordable housing in the area, working closely with the Comhairle in the preparation and delivery of the SHIP.

4.3.3 In terms of the demand for social rented accommodation, there were 586 applicants on the HHP Waiting List (as at April 2017), comprising 444 applicants waiting for a first time offer of housing and 142 current tenants on the Transfer List, looking to move to a more suitable HHP property.

4.3.4 The largest demand for HHP housing is in the town of Stornoway, with around 59% of all applicants recording this area as their preference. The next largest areas of demand are Back/Tong in Lewis (5% of all applicants) and Tarbert, Harris (5%). Creagorry/Kilervagh in Benbecula had the next highest demand with 5% of all applicants.
4.3.5 HHP also reported that 54% of all applicants were single people (9% being 60 and over) and that 27% were households with children. This has led to a mismatch developing between the current supply of social housing and the demand expressed on the Waiting List. In terms of the size, more single person and large family homes are required.

4.3.6 In 2016/17 136 homeless applications were made to the Comhairle and the authority is dependent on HHP to discharge its statutory duties to these clients. Although the numbers of people presenting to the Comhairle as homeless has been steadily reducing over the last ten years, they are still significant relative to the solutions available and there are some areas of difficulty.

4.3.7 The main issues relating to allocations arise when a person evicted by HHP presents as homeless and HHP are unwilling to house them again, or a homeless client requires ongoing support to maintain a tenancy and support providers cannot be identified. In the absence of alternative housing providers, there can be undue delay in fully discharging the homelessness obligation in these circumstances.

4.3.8 The time homeless clients have to stay in temporary accommodation before receiving an offer of permanent accommodation is also an area of pressure on the service. These issues are considered further in Chapter 5, which provides detailed information on the homeless situation in the Outer Hebrides.

4.3.9 Trust Housing Association (THA) own and manage 60 social housing units providing sheltered and very sheltered housing in two sites close to Stornoway Town Centre. There have been periodic problems with lack of demand at one site, though not in more recent times, but the Association has no current plans for further development in the Islands.

4.4 Private Sector Housing

4.4.1 There is minimal speculative private house building in the Outer Hebrides and the various mainland oriented new build initiatives with developers are not relevant in the local situation, thus reducing opportunities for first time buyers. There is therefore a predominance of individual self-build.

4.4.2 The Development Plan recognises the predominance of individual builds on 'windfall sites' and the difficulty of estimating future construction levels, not least because of changing financial scenarios.

4.4.3 Historically, the Croft House Grant Scheme (CHGS) provided financial help towards new build and for the improvement and repair of houses in crofting tenure and was the most significant mechanism to assist the supply of new self-build housing, particularly in rural areas.

4.4.4 Crofting tenure means that while crofters provide their own house they do not own the land on which the house is built. This constraint can hinder access to the usual routes to housing finance and the Scottish Government scheme was designed to ease this burden by bridging the funding gap.

4.4.5 The scheme was reformed in 2015 and crofters can apply for up £38,000 grant towards the cost of a new property if they live on an island and in specified mainland areas. However, although this amount is higher than previously available, the qualifying criteria is more stringent and the new scheme does not offer an affordable loan element.

4.4.6 At a Population/Migration Seminar hosted by the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership in November 2016, it was agreed that the current Croft House Grant Scheme is in need of urgent revision and the previous grant/loan scheme was far more effective and had a much more positive impact on housing provision.
4.4.7 Examples were cited of young people giving up on aspirations to build new croft houses due to bureaucratic processes and procedures, while access to land both for housing and to develop as working crofts is overly complicated.

4.4.8 There was a strongly expressed belief that achieving changes to the current scheme could encourage young people to remain within the islands and particularly within more rural areas.

4.4.9 Individual building on non-croft land has become increasingly difficult since the banking crisis of 2007/08. Since then, many self-build mortgage providers have withdrawn from the market and those remaining may require substantial private financial input before they will lend. Previously, phased payments were routinely released at different stages of construction but now potential borrowers may face a requirement that houses are built up to wind and watertight condition before mortgage finance is allocated.

Figure 4-1 below shows the decline in new private sector builds since the credit crunch.
4.5 Incomes and Affordability

4.5.1 As a result of relatively low economic output, the Outer Hebrides incomes tend to be well below the Scottish average. In 2014 the median weekly wage for a full-time worker in Outer Hebrides was £445.50 compared with £519.40 for Scotland and £520.20 for the UK.

4.5.2 The Office for National Statistics released a report on Regional Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) 2012 in June 2014. The Outer Hebrides had the third lowest GDHI per head in Scotland at £14,541 compared to the Scottish average of £16,267. From 2002 to 2007 GDHI was lower in all areas than that of the Scottish average. However, from 2008 to 2010 GDHI in Shetland was higher, but in 2011 and 2012 GDHI was higher in Orkney. The Outer Hebrides has had the lowest GDHI in all the above areas since 2007.

4.5.3 One of the ‘Ballot Promises’ made to tenants by HHP at the time of the Stock Transfer was that rent levels would not increase more than RPI+1% for a guaranteed five year period. HHP has been able to keep the annual rent increase to RPI+1% beyond the original five year guarantee.

4.5.4 In 2016, the average rent of an HHP property was £71.68 per week, which was below the Scottish average. This figure is also substantially below the current rents in the local Private Rented Sector.

4.5.5 HHP has sought out the views of tenants in regard to affordability as part of its annual Tenants Satisfaction Survey. The most recent Survey found that 66% of respondents felt that rents were good value for money (27% thought rents were ‘Very Good’ value for money and 39% thought rents were ‘Fairly Good’ value for money. Of those surveyed, only 14% felt the rents offered ‘Poor’ value for money.

4.5.6 The HHP rent levels were also compared against similar rural RSLs (Orkney, Hjatland, Albyn and Argyle Community Housing Association) using the Scottish Housing Regulators on-line comparison tool, and rents were found to be lower than the sample average.

4.5.7 With regard to Income/Affordability ratios in the Outer Hebrides, some analysis has been carried out on the affordability of House Prices and the Private and Social Housing sectors. Information from sources such as HHP, Scottish Housing...
Regulator, and the Comhairle’s Private Sector House Condition Survey has enabled a useful range of affordability data to be considered.

4.5.8 In terms of house price affordability, house sales data from the CMHA Datapack has been used, along with data on the Median Weekly Incomes, again sourced from the CMHA Datapack. This has enabled an analysis using the HNDA Guidance recommendation of taking a multiplier of 4 times a household’s income to determine affordability. The affordability of House Prices in the Outer Hebrides is shown in the Table below.

### Table 4-1 House Price Affordability 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lower Quartile</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Upper Quartile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>House Price</td>
<td>Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer Hebrides</td>
<td>£10,797</td>
<td>£75,000</td>
<td>£22,885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Scottish Government- Datapack 2016

4.5.9 This information shows that households in the lower quartile, with an affordability ratio of 4.4, would not generally be able to afford home ownership. The median and upper quartile households would find home ownership affordable.

4.5.10 Further analysis of the Private Rented Sector using Datapack income information confirms this. Taking the lower quartile income data, the upper level rent of £138 per week for the Stornoway HMA would be unaffordable for these households with 42% of household income being required to meet this rent. Although the lower level of Stornoway HMA rent (£112 per week) is shown being affordable, this comes in very close to the margin of 35%.

### Table 4-2 Private Rented Sector Affordability Ratios - Stornoway HMA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRS HMA</th>
<th>Stornoway</th>
<th>Lower Quartile</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Upper Quartile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Income</td>
<td>£220</td>
<td>£440</td>
<td>£822</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Rent</td>
<td>£112</td>
<td>£112</td>
<td>£112</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Rent</td>
<td>£138</td>
<td>£138</td>
<td>£138</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SG Datapack

4.5.11 A similar analysis of the Rural HMA shows that the range of rents between £87 and £113 per week are affordable, although households in the lower quartile come very close to the 35% margin for the upper rent level.

### Table 4-3 Private Rented Sector Affordability Ratios - Rural HMA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRS Rural HMA</th>
<th>Lower Quartile</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Upper Quartile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Income</td>
<td>£220</td>
<td>£440</td>
<td>£822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Rent</td>
<td>£87</td>
<td>£87</td>
<td>£87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Rent</td>
<td>£113</td>
<td>£113</td>
<td>£113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SG Datapack
4.5.12 Further analysis of social rent affordability was carried out in a similar way to that carried out on private sector rents as shown in the Table below. This shows that social rents across both HMAs are generally affordable.

Table 4-4 Social Rented Housing Affordability Ratios

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lower Quartile</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Upper Quartile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weekly Income</strong></td>
<td>£208</td>
<td>£440</td>
<td>£822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Weekly Rent</strong></td>
<td>£71.68</td>
<td>£71.68</td>
<td>71.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ratio</strong></td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HHP and SG Datapack

4.6 Economy

4.6.1 The Comhairle, together with Community Planning Partners, is committed to ensuring economic growth and the 2013-2023 Single Outcome Agreement encompassed the long-term vision for the Islands. The Outer Hebrides' location and geography present major economic challenges with traditional industries such as crofting, fishing and tweed weaving in decline. However, several growth sectors have been identified to secure the future economic sustainability of the Islands, including Renewable Energy opportunities, Tourism, Community Land Ownership, Creative Industries, the Food and Drink Industry and Further Education opportunities. It is essential that the Outer Hebrides develops a stable economy that provides opportunities for vocational training, graduate placement and choices for skilled workers towards employment or business start-up. The LOIP will replace the SOA from 2017, and the content of the draft document is summarised at Chapter 1.

4.6.2 Alongside employment opportunities there requires to be a strong and adaptable housing market to provide affordable opportunities for people at all stages in household formation to access suitable housing. In the short to medium term in-migrants will be the mainstay of population and workforce growth. Agencies will need to develop support services to help in-migrants to integrate effectively into their jobs and communities.

4.6.3 Economic output in the Outer Hebrides remains below the national average. With projected further reductions in public sector spending and subsequent job losses and economic constraints, output is anticipated to decrease further. Although there are many challenges, there are also significant emergent opportunities for growth including developments in renewable energy, creative industries, tourism and digital connectivity.

4.6.4 The Office for National Statistics published Regional Gross Value Added (Income Approach) in December 2014 by NUTS 3 (Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics) geography. These statistics inform the general public about the state of the economy and provide insight into the relative economic positions of local areas and issues. GVA in the Outer Hebrides is the lowest of the island areas and is the sixth lowest in Scotland at £15,240. The Scottish average is £21,982. In comparison to the other island areas, Shetland consistently has a higher GVA and is often higher than the Scottish average. Orkney has a similar GVA to the Outer Hebrides, but has been consistently higher since 2009.

4.6.5 The Outer Hebrides has had a 20.8% increase in GVA over the period 2003 to 2013, Orkney a 42.2% increase, Shetland a 31.7% increase and Scotland a 34.5% increase.
4.7 House Sales

4.7.1 Table 4-5 below shows that the median resale price in the Outer Hebrides rose from £85,000 in 2011 to £95,000 in 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Housing Market Areas</th>
<th>Volume of Sales</th>
<th>Lower Quartile</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Upper Quartile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>£55,000</td>
<td>£85,000</td>
<td>£121,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>£62,150</td>
<td>£85,000</td>
<td>£125,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>£70,000</td>
<td>£90,608</td>
<td>£125,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>£67,000</td>
<td>£90,000</td>
<td>£125,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>£72,000</td>
<td>£95,000</td>
<td>£136,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Registers of Scotland with further processing by Scottish Government (Datapack)

4.7.2 Since 2011, the Comhairle has kept its own database of properties for sale. Figure 4-2 shows the difference between the average asking price of property sold, the actual price achieved and the price of all the property still for sale. The average price achieved has now matched and exceeded the average asking price of property sold within the Outer Hebrides. However, the average asking price of all remaining property for sale is still much higher. Comhairle records show that nearly 40% of all vendors reduce their asking price to achieve a sale.

Figure 4-2 Average Property Prices 2011-2015

Source: CNES analysis of house sales

4.7.3 Since the second quarter (financial year) of 2013 both the volume and value of sales have increased in both HMAs. However, the high level of deposit required, combined with current low mortgage availability, has seen the recent slowing down of this upturn.
4.8 Affordability of Local House Prices

4.8.1 To examine the affordability of house purchase at the entry level we use the benchmark of a mortgage for a lower quartile price property which is four times the lower quartile joint household income (these are the default values used in the HNDA tool).

4.8.2 This would suggest that despite the recent increase in house prices, households with two full time earners do not face major affordability issues when purchasing a property. Current high deposit requirements may make getting a mortgage more difficult, thus putting more pressure on social/private rented accommodation.
4.8.3 Single person households with a lower quartile income of £16,801 have had and continue to have affordable housing problems, especially as there are limited numbers of one and two bedroom properties in the Outer Hebrides.

4.8.4 Single person households earning around the median wage of £24,066 saw entry level properties throughout the Outer Hebrides become affordable since the credit crunch.

4.8.5 Meetings were held in 2016 with local estate agents and financial advisors to establish their current perception of the market.

4.8.6 It was affirmed that 2008 had been a ‘boom’ year for the seller throughout the UK, including the Outer Hebrides, and that the period from 2011-2015 saw a significant downturn with many house sales being advertised below valuation.

4.8.7 Although representatives considered the general outlook for the housing market going forward as positive with some properties now selling on target or slightly beyond asking price, the Comhairle’s own data for property for sale during 2015/16 recorded a substantial number of properties still requiring a reduction in their original price in order to achieve a sale. Particularly challenging areas are:

- Scalpay – many large older houses, distance from centre;
- Point - a range of both older and new larger dwellings (this area is within a short commute of Stornoway but the market is currently and unusually slow-moving);
- Tolsta - due to commuting distance;
- South Lochs and Ness – also due to commute.

4.8.8 As far as the effects of Brexit on the market, the common view held by those interviewed was that, although there was a little uncertainty and a fall in prices in the initial 3 months UK-wide, this did not influence the Islands’ situation and it was not anticipated that there will be a detrimental effect on sales in the near future.

4.8.9 Evidence also shows that the majority of first time buyers are already living within the Outer Hebrides. There is still a demand, however, mainly over the summer months, from people wishing to move from the mainland, mainly relocating entirely, retiring, rather than purchasing a second home/holiday home.

4.8.10 The 3% tax on second homes and buy to let properties has had an effect on market sales. 2015 had been a strong year for these, perhaps in part due to additional purchases made in order to avoid the levy. This change should allow more first time buyers access to affordable homes and the opportunity to get onto the property ladder. It will, however, exacerbate the shortage of rental properties available. Discussions with agents indicated that there is currently a very high demand for 1 and 2 bedroom properties, particularly in the Stornoway area.

4.8.11 Agents’ experience is that the typical First Time Buyer in the Outer Hebrides has changed and expectations seem to be higher. Where in previous years a young couple/family would buy an older home to renovate, the inclination now is to purchase a property which needs very little work and is typically for sale at around £100-£110k. This leaves a considerable number of older houses, which need moderate to extensive renovation sitting on the market for some time, mainly in the areas mentioned in para 4.8.7 above.

4.8.12 Although the private rented sector is small and informal, with very few landlords having more than one property, there is a very buoyant rental market at present with the current rent within the Stornoway HMA for a 2/3 bedroom house between £112 and £138 per week and ranging from £87 to £113 per week in the Rural HMA. Typical tenants are local young singles or couples wishing to get on the property ladder and saving for a deposit for their first home.
4.8.13 There has also been a marked increase in interest in Shared Equity housing in recent years. Shared Equity has become an important (and popular) part of the Affordable Housing programme since first introduced on the Islands in 2011. To date, some 59 properties have been built in and around Stornoway. At present there are 18 in development.

4.8.14 Demand for Shared Equity housing has been high and there have been no issues relating to applicants not being able to secure a mortgage for this type of tenure. Each Shared Equity scheme offered has been oversubscribed.

4.8.15 To date, Shared Equity has not been tested outwith Stornoway but this is something to be explored for the future, potentially through links with wider population retention initiatives.

4.9 Empty Homes/Second Homes

4.9.1 The high incidence of empty private sector homes is regularly identified as a problematic feature of the Outer Hebrides housing system. However, the headline figures released by financial institutions for national comparison are misleading when the statistics are analysed. There is no notable issue with empty properties in the social rented sector where void levels overall are extremely low.

4.9.2 The figures are drawn from a snapshot of Comhairle Council Tax and are made up of various categories reflecting the circumstances of the property owner. They therefore include properties which for reasons of condition or ownership are not available to address housing need, properties which are second homes or purpose built holiday lets, and properties currently for sale or subject to legal processes (e.g. owner deceased and estate not settled).

4.9.3 The 2015 Household Estimates released by the National Records of Scotland (NRS) estimated that 6.3% (approx. 920 houses) of the dwellings in the Outer Hebrides were vacant and that 5.1% (approx. 800 houses) of the dwellings were second homes.

4.9.4 Based on these statistics and the category breakdown Scottish Government estimates that only 273 properties are realistically likely to contribute to local housing supply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All Dwellings</th>
<th>Occupied</th>
<th>Vacant %</th>
<th>2nd Homes %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>6178</td>
<td>5774</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>6239</td>
<td>5846</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>6307</td>
<td>5948</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>6338</td>
<td>5931</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>6338</td>
<td>5931</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Records of Scotland- Small Area Household Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All Dwellings</th>
<th>Occupied</th>
<th>Vacant %</th>
<th>2nd Homes %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>8218</td>
<td>6792</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>8220</td>
<td>6868</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>8184</td>
<td>6943</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>8185</td>
<td>6916</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>8185</td>
<td>6916</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Records of Scotland- Small Area Household Estimates
4.9.5 Table 4-8 below details the components of dwellings in the Outer Hebrides. This shows that the trend for the number of vacant dwellings and second homes is downwards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household Estimates</td>
<td>12,018</td>
<td>12,208</td>
<td>12,784</td>
<td>12,924</td>
<td>12,920</td>
<td>12,968</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Dwellings &amp; Second Homes</td>
<td>1,895</td>
<td>1,830</td>
<td>1,744</td>
<td>1,596</td>
<td>1,676</td>
<td>1,660</td>
<td>-1.0%</td>
<td>-12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Dwellings</td>
<td>14,258</td>
<td>14,396</td>
<td>14,458</td>
<td>14,490</td>
<td>14,520</td>
<td>14,577</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Estimates</td>
<td>27,600</td>
<td>27,690</td>
<td>27,560</td>
<td>27,400</td>
<td>27,250</td>
<td>27,070</td>
<td>-0.7%</td>
<td>-1.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NRS 2015 Household Estimate

4.9.6 Although the number is decreasing, the Outer Hebrides still has the second highest number of vacant and second home properties in Scotland.

4.9.7 This is especially so in the Rural HMA, particularly in Barra and Vatersay. The Stornoway HMA has 4% vacant dwellings and 2% second homes, in comparison to the Rural HMA which has 8% vacant dwellings and 4% second homes.

**Figure 4-5 Estimated Population in the Outer Hebrides 2006-2016**

![Graph showing % Vacant Dwellings and 2nd Homes](chart)

Source: NRS 2015 Household Estimates

4.9.8 New regulations introduced by the Scottish Government allow Councils to increase the Council Tax charges on certain long-term empty properties. This, alongside changes to the definitions of what constitutes a second home or long-term empty
dwelling, has led to a change in the numbers being classed as vacant dwellings or second homes.

4.9.9 The Comhairle implemented a 100% levy on empty homes from 1 April 2013, which was amended in April 2014 to exempt properties under repair for two years from new ownership. This may have resulted in the fluctuations in vacant dwellings and second homes figures over the last couple of years but it is difficult to assess whether changes are due to new regulations or reclassification or to the economic climate. An average sum of £150k per year is allocated to directly contribute to housing development by way of funding feasibility studies and occasionally to meet additional infrastructure costs.

4.9.10 The Comhairle has made previous attempts to reduce the number of empty properties. The most recent was in 2013 when an Empty Home Loan Scheme funded by Scottish Government was introduced. This offered owners an interest free loan of up to £20,000 for a period of five years providing the property was rented out at an affordable rent for that timescale. However, after some initial interest a large number of owners dropped out, mainly due to the low rental income that could be charged (no more than the weekly rent for an HHP property with the same number of bedrooms). Some properties were in need of more than the maximum £20k loan to bring them up to the required standard and many owners were unwilling or unable to contribute additional funds.

4.9.11 There will always be an issue over how economically viable it is to return a below standard property to use, while owner willingness, property location, accessibility, and client demand all have to be considered too.

4.9.12 While these factors will further reduce the number of properties that could potentially become effective again, many respondents to the LHS consultation suggested that addressing this issue could assist other agendas such as the population/migration ambitions and that funding could be targeted to specific areas.

4.9.13 Dedicated staff resources, policy decisions on the use of mechanisms such as compulsory purchase, and Comhairle allocated grant funding would be required to enable the development of a scheme, with criteria devised to suit local rather than national requirements. This LHS carries a commitment to revisit the potential contribution of Empty Homes to the local housing system.

4.10 Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) Outcomes

4.10.1 A key stage in the LHS process is an assessment of the housing need and demand in the area. Since the last LHS was completed, the Scottish Government has introduced a new HNDA process, along with supporting Guidance, aimed at simplifying and streamlining the process.

4.10.2 The Comhairle has also used a HNDA modelling Tool provided by the Scottish Government’s Centre for Housing Market and Analysis (CHMA). The Tool comes pre-populated with a wide variety of statistical information relevant to the Outer Hebrides, such as Household Formation, Affordability, Housing Need and Economic Activity.

4.10.3 Users can amend the criteria to test different scenarios, each focusing on a particular set of circumstances, in order to provide a robust range of potential outputs.

4.10.4 The HNDA process can therefore produce an estimate of the future number of additional homes required to meet both current and future need and demand in the area. The outputs produced relate to four main tenure types:
- Social rent
- Below Market Rent
- Private Rent
- Buyers
4.10.5 The HNDA covers the years 2017-2022 and will be used to inform the content of future SHIPs, as well as the Local Housing Strategy. The HNDA also informs the Housing Supply Target and reflects the Local Development Plan, the OHHSCP Strategic Commissioning Plan, the Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2023 and other corporate strategies.

4.10.6 For the purposes of informing the Comhairle’s LHS, four scenarios utilising different demographic and economic projections have been looked at. These scenarios have taken account of different housing need figures, projections around migration and population levels, as well as house prices and affordability.

4.10.7 Scenario 1, the ‘Core Model’, uses the core data provided with the HNDA Tool, without any amendments. It provides a useful baseline figure for comparison with other Scenarios.

4.10.8 Scenario 2, ‘HHP Waiting List’, focuses on the Waiting List figures for HHP as at July 2016 (438 applicants).

4.10.9 Scenario 3, ‘More Buyers’ considers the current high demand for Shared Equity housing by assuming a higher percentage of the population will be able to afford to buy.

4.10.10 Scenario 4, ‘Low Migration’, estimates the impact of low migration in terms of household formation as a way of examining the impact of decreasing population.

4.10.11 The outputs produced by the HNDA are as shown in the following Table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Scenario 1 Core</th>
<th>Scenario 2 Waiting List</th>
<th>Scenario 3 More Buyers</th>
<th>Scenario 4 Low Migration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Rent</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Market Rent</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Rent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buyers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.10.12 The HNDA Tool provides outputs only relating to new, additional housing units and does not take in to account housing need that can be addressed through in-situ (such as disabled adaptations) or housing management solutions. It should be noted that the Tool does not attempt to predict future housing estimates with complete precision. However, these are covered in the chapters on Housing Stock and Specialist Provision.

4.10.13 These figures produced by the HNDA were further refined during the development of the final Local Housing Strategy in order to produce a Housing Supply Target (HST) for affordable housing for the area. The HST will show the amount of this need that can realistically be met on the ground (taking account of resources, Comhairle policy, etc.) The amount and location of land needed to meet the HST will be set out in the LDP.

4.10.14 As a comparison, the previous HNDA carried out in 2011 estimated an annual shortfall of 36 social housing units per year and this became the target amount approved by Comhairle.

4.10.15 The Housing Supply Target (HST) sets out the estimated level of additional housing, across all tenures, which will be delivered over the period of the LHS. As per Scottish Government Guidance, the HST is a policy based interpretation of the findings of the HNDA, taking account of a range of factors including:
• Economic factors
• Capacity of the construction sector
• Availability of resources
• Likely pace and scale of delivery
• Recent development levels
• Policy decisions

4.10.16 In terms of economic factors, the Comhairle has considered the low economic base on the island in regards to affordability and house prices.

4.10.17 Speculative build by large national building firms does not occur on the islands. There is only a small number of local building firms able to deliver larger scale affordable housing developments (25-40 units), and limited numbers of small firms able to deliver smaller rural schemes, particularly in the southern isles.

4.10.18 In terms of resources, the Comhairle has considered the limited availability of Comhairle resources to support Affordable Housing, HHP’s borrowing capacity and the Scottish Governments Resource Planning Assumptions for the period 2018/19 to 2020/21 (£25m).

4.10.19 The main policy decisions taken into account by the Comhairle have been the developing Population Retention Strategy and ‘Our Islands; Our Future’.

4.10.20 The Comhairle has taken an approach to set a HST higher than the baseline HNDA outputs. This is primarily driven by the desire to provide as many opportunities as possible to retain and grow the current population levels. New housing will have a positive impact on economic recovery as well as encouraging families and particularly young people to stay, or settle in the Outer Hebrides.

4.10.21 The HST for the Outer Hebrides is:

Social Rented: 35 units per annum
Below Market Ren/Equity: 15 units per annum
Private Rented Sector: 12 units per annum
Buyers: 30 units per annum

4.10.22 Over the five year period of the LHS, this would amount to at least 460 new homes across all tenures being required in the Outer Hebrides.

4.10.23 The Comhairle’s most recent SHIP sets out a requirement for 347 new affordable housing units over a five year period to 2021/22. It should be noted that this includes 66 units required for the specific Extra Care/Care Home Reprovisioning project. In terms of mainstream affordable houses (for Social Rent and Shared Equity), the SHIP has made provision for 281 new units. The SHIP can be accessed on the Comhairle’s website.

4.10.24 In relation to land supply for new housing, the Comhairle has to consider the requirements of the Scottish Government in terms of Planning policy relating to the identification of housing requirements, the provision of land for housing and the delivery of homes through the planning system as appropriate to the challenges and characteristics of the area.
4.10.25 The Comhairle carries out a Housing Land Audit (HLA) on a bi-ennial basis. This identifies potential housing sites in the area and assists with future planning, particularly with the development of the Comhairle’s SHIP. The HLA informs the Development Plan, the HNDA, the LHS and, consequently, influences the level of the HST.

4.10.26 The most recent HLA was carried out in 2015 and, on paper, demonstrated that there is an adequate supply of land for housing across the islands for at least the next five years. All of the sites identified in the HLA are subject to feasibility studies and this process will remove some sites from the list. It should be noted that securing suitable land for housing is challenging, particularly in rural areas, due to constraints such as services provision, cost and ownership issues.

4.11 Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP)

4.11.1 The Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) is currently the Scottish Government’s main mechanism for the development of new affordable housing. Chapter 1 provides more information on the current resources context.

4.11.2 The SG issues Resource Planning Assumptions (RPA) to each local authority and this sets out the amount of grant funding that will be made available for the development of new affordable homes (the balance coming from Registered Social Landlords’ private borrowing and, where appropriate, an element of local authority financial support).

4.11.3 This information enables local authorities to develop a SHIP which has to be submitted to the SG on a regular basis. The purpose of the SHIP is to set out a Council’s housing investment priorities over a five year period, as informed by the objectives of the LHS and the LDP.

4.11.4 The SHIP provides details of the number of units proposed, their location, tenure type, the SG funding required for providing these units, and the likely completion date. The SHIP can include affordable housing supply through new provision, replacement of existing stock or through rehabilitation. It can encompass social rented housing, low cost home ownership and shared equity schemes and includes the use of gap sites, brownfield sites as well as greenfield locations.
4.11.5 The Comhairle works in partnership with HHP as the main delivery partner in developing its SHIP. The Comhairle’s current SHIP covers the period 2017/18 to 2021/22. As previously mentioned, the SHIP anticipates 347 new units will be built (281 for Affordable Housing and 66 for Extra Care). A link to the new document for 2018/19 onwards is listed in the LHS Appendices.

4.11.6 Infrastructure issues, particularly in more rural areas, can result in affordable housing schemes requiring more than the benchmark Scottish Government grant per unit to make them viable. This has resulted in an absence of shared equity provision outwith the Stornoway HMA due to concerns over creating a negative equity situation, but a solution to this will be sought in order to expand options in these areas in line with population initiatives.

4.11.7 This issue is one which could benefit from the ability to use housing funding more flexibly should the Island Deal come to fruition and the “island proofing” concept referred to in Chapter 2 in relation to planning and development be applied more comprehensively.

4.12 The Challenges We Face
Consideration of the various elements currently affecting the local housing system has resulted in a number of pressures being identified:

- **Existing Housing Need**: although HHP has seen a decrease in the number of applicants on its Waiting List in recent years, (largely due to the new build programme), there is still a significant number of people in need of Affordable Housing, primarily in and around Stornoway. Demand in some rural areas is low, and HHP reports difficulties in allocating properties in the most remote areas. There is also a mismatch developing between the existing housing stock and applicants in terms of the size of property required.
What We Intend to Do

**Homelessness:** The number of people presenting as Homeless has reduced steadily since 2011, but there is still a significant pressure on the Homeless Service in a number of ways. These include the number of clients requiring intensive support (such as those with Mental Health, Learning Difficulties issues) and the length of time applicants have to stay in temporary accommodation until they receive a permanent offer of housing.

**Affordability:** Since the ‘Credit Crunch’ in 2007/08, the Banks and Building Societies have taken a much more risk-averse approach to lending. Difficulties accessing full mortgages, particularly for self-build homes, have made it challenging for people to get on the housing ladder, especially first time buyers.

**Demographics:** The current population projections for the Outer Hebrides will have implications for housing supply. Since 1984 the Outer Hebrides’ population has decreased while Scotland’s population has risen over this period. This period has also seen an increase in the age of the population. Persons aged 60 and over make up 31% of the population in the Outer Hebrides, while the figure for Scotland as a whole is 24%. It is projected that the population of the Outer Hebrides will continue to decrease steadily, whilst the percentage of elderly households is expected to grow.

**Empty Homes:** Detail has been provided on the number of Empty Homes in the area. Many of these properties are not suitable, or indeed available. The challenge will be to see how many of these properties are actually able to be brought back in to the effective housing supply (in terms of availability, location and actual physical condition) through a suitable mechanism.

**Re-Provisioning of Care:** An exercise is currently underway to develop new residential care provision in Lewis combined with Extra Care Housing. This is considered in more detail in the Independent Living chapter.

**Independent Living:** Plans and aspirations to introduce more housing options for client groups requiring support to live independently are provided in chapter 6.

**Crofter Housing Scheme:** Although the Scottish Government has taken on board feedback and made amendments to the current Scheme, it does not fully meet the needs of the Crofting community and does not play such an important role in rural housing provision as in the past.

**Location of new supply:** Ensuring that provision of new affordable housing meets the needs of both the Stornoway/Broad Bay area and rural areas and that location, type and size will support wider agendas.

### 4.13 What We Intend to Do

*Housing Supply is Sufficient to Support People’s Needs and Aspirations and Assist Wider Corporate Aims*

#### 4.13.1
A comprehensive range of actions have been developed to direct the efforts of the Comhairle and partners towards achievement of the strategic outcome. Continued partnership working with local agencies is crucial to successful development and achievement of the elements we consider will help deliver an increased housing supply across all areas of the Islands.

#### 4.13.2
Based on current known resources plus local economic and housing market characteristics, and consideration of the HNDA outcomes, an overall Housing Supply
Target of 460 new housing units (175 affordable homes, 75 Below Market Rent, 60 Private Rented Sector and 150 private sector properties) over the period of the LHS 2017-2022.

4.13.3 The actions are designed to address currently identified housing need and demand issues and also to contribute to the wider ambitions of the Comhairle and the Community Planning partners.

4.13.4 Currently the Comhairle has access to an unprecedented level of AHSP funding which provides huge opportunity to increase the provision of affordable housing, both traditional social rented and also shared equity units. There are however challenges and risks attached to focusing all of the resources on the affordable housing sector, and early discussions have been had with Scottish Ministers regarding potential flexibility of usage to address issues prevalent in other tenures. These discussions are being followed up as a priority so that plans may be put in place if Scottish Government permission is granted for current AHSP criteria to be relaxed in order that the Comhairle can make best use of the funding.

4.13.5 There is another potential major opportunity should the Comhairle be allocated a single ‘pot’ of Housing money through the ‘Islands Deal’. If this came to fruition it would release substantial funding for increasing housing provision across all tenures and enable long-term planning expressly linked to other community regeneration aspirations.

4.13.6 Delivery of the targets relating to Housing Supply within this LHS will demonstrate the Comhairle’s specific support for three of the Scottish Government National Outcomes: “A Well Functioning Housing System”; “High Quality Sustainable Homes”; and “Homes That Meet People’s Needs”. In turn, these will influence the outcome regarding “Sustainable Communities”.

4.13.7 One of the key areas taken into account is the developing initiative to retain and grow the population in remote rural areas. As well as identifying a number of mainstream rural housing developments of 6-10 units, it is proposed to develop some additional and targeted small rural regeneration sites.

4.13.8 These would potentially be small, two-unit developments built in the heart of a village instead of on the periphery and could be targeted towards areas in most need. The new homes could be packaged in one contract covering a specific area and a number of villages and progressed in partnership with Community Landlords and Grazing Committees.

Potential Actions

- delivery of **323 Social Rented** properties (as per SHIP)
- delivery of **24 Shared Equity** properties (as per SHIP)
- ensure that provision of new affordable housing meets the needs of both the Stornoway/Broad Bay area and the rural areas and that location, type and size will support wider agendas.
- work with Community Landowners towards provision of new housing within their areas including bringing empty homes back into effective use.
- develop land bank targets for affordable housing, including in partnership with community landowners for rural areas.
- investigate and support self-build and assisted first time buyer initiatives such as Open Market Shared Equity and Rent to Buy with local partners, including community landowners (**20 units** over the period).
- work with partners to provide Extra Care housing and expansion of supported housing options for vulnerable client groups. (**66 Extra Care houses**)
• develop opportunities to introduce new tenures such as mid-market rent through working with local agencies.
• investigate potential for introducing an Empty Homes project.
• investigate mechanisms to support and develop the Private Rented sector.
• introduce an online generic Housing Options guide.
• support attainment of single housing fund.
• commitment to on-going work with the SG to encourage Housing Grant development and investment.
• develop rural regeneration sites.
CHAPTER 5

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 - HOMELESSNESS

*Homeless Clients can Access a Range of Advice, Support and Appropriate Accommodation to Suit their Needs*

This chapter informs on the issues which impact on delivery of the Comhairle\'s statutory duties towards homeless persons and those threatened with homelessness and the characteristics and profile of applicants with regard to their ongoing housing and related needs. There are clear connections with health and social care issues, with health and wellbeing in general, and with the importance of adequate and well-linked services for homeless young people and other particularly vulnerable clients.

Throughout the lifespan of the LHS, the intended activity specifically supports National Outcomes relating to “A Well-Functioning Housing System”; “High Quality Sustainable Homes”; and “Homes That Meet People\’s Needs”. In turn, these will influence the target on achieving “Sustainable Communities”.

All charts and tables in this chapter were produced in-house using data drawn from Scottish Government Returns.

5.1 Progress with Addressing Homelessness 2011-2016

5.1.1 The review of the LHS 2011-2016 demonstrated that the Homelessness Service had developed over the period to meet increasing operational pressures following the phasing out of priority need in 2012, the introduction of the Housing Options approach and the Housing Support Duty, with specific notable achievements being:

- A reduction of 5.3% in overall number of homeless applicants
- Phasing out of Priority Need by target date
- Annual reduction in average numbers of households in temporary accommodation at 31 March
- The Acres purpose-built temporary accommodation unit opened in September 2014 in Stornoway, resulting in a significant decrease in the use of Bed and Breakfast facilities
- The staffing complement has increased and some posts were redesigned following a review of the Service in 2016
- The numbers awaiting an offer of permanent accommodation have decreased

5.2 WHERE WE ARE NOW

Homelessness Applications

5.2.1 The Comhairle has a statutory duty towards homeless persons and those threatened with homelessness in terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 Part II as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003. Following the implementation of this legislation, homelessness presentations in the Western Isles increased to a peak of 282 households in the year 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007. The numbers presenting have been steadily decreasing over the past 10 years, as illustrated in Chart 5.1 below, thus meeting Outcome 4 of the Outer Hebrides Local Housing Strategy 2011-2016. During the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017, 136 homelessness applications were made to the Comhairle consisting of 152 adults and 72 children.
5.3 Housing Options Applications

5.3.1 The Comhairle aspires to increased homelessness prevention and any applicant threatened with homelessness is offered a housing options interview in the first instance in order to attempt to prevent homelessness from happening. The Comhairle has a duty to advise all applicants of their right to a homelessness interview if that is their preferred option. During the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017, 17 housing options applications were made. Seven of these went on to make a homelessness application. The majority of housing options approaches are made as a result of a Notice to Quit private rented accommodation.

5.3.2 Housing Options applications in the Western Isles are low, possibly due to the lack of options available and the generally held perception that a social tenancy is preferable to a private tenancy. The private rented sector is limited and the majority of landlords will not accept tenants on Housing Benefit. This situation is likely to be further exacerbated when Universal Credit goes live in 2017.

**Figure 5.1 Homelessness and Housing Options Applications in the Western Isles 2007-2017**

5.3.3 In order to try and reduce homelessness further, the Comhairle intends to develop an online Housing Options Guide and to produce and implement Housing Options Procedures with regard to the Scottish Government’s recently published Housing Options Guide. This should encourage more housing option approaches at an earlier stage which lead to a satisfactory housing outcome, such as remaining in the current accommodation or securing private rent, rather than leading to a homelessness application. The outcomes for Housing Options applicants in the Western Isles for those cases closed between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017 are shown at Chart 5.2.

**Figure 5.2 Housing Options Outcomes in the Western Isles 2016-2017**
5.4 Homelessness Applications

5.4.1 Unsurprisingly, the majority of homelessness applications are made to the Stornoway Office which covers Lewis and Harris, the area with the greatest population. Numbers presenting in Lewis have decreased steadily over the past 10 years as shown in Chart 5.3 below. The overall trend in Uist, while fluctuating, is a slight decrease whilst numbers in Harris and Barra have remained low and fairly constant. Applications have been decreasing for Scotland as a whole for the past number of years with a further 2% decrease last year. Homelessness applications decreased for half of Scotland’s Local Authorities in 2016-2017.

Figure 5.3 Homelessness Applications in the Western Isles by area 2016-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Homelessness Applications</th>
<th>Applications to Lewis</th>
<th>Applications to Harris</th>
<th>Applications to Uist</th>
<th>Applications to Barra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5-1 Proportion of Homeless Presentations to Total Households in the Western Isles by Area 2015-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Lewis</th>
<th>Harris</th>
<th>Uist</th>
<th>Barra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of households by area</td>
<td>8,846</td>
<td>911</td>
<td>2,232</td>
<td>587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of households presenting as homeless</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of homeless applicants to all homeless households</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of homeless households to all households by area</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.2 The Comhairle’s rate of repeat homelessness in 2016-2017 was very low at 1%. A household is regarded as a repeat presentation if they apply within 12 months of a previous application being closed. The average in Scotland was 6.7%.

5.4.3 Household types making a homelessness application in the Western Isles remain generally consistent proportionately locally and nationally. The main household type
presenting continues to be single people with 50% of applications being made by single men and 19% by single women. In Scotland as a whole 46% of applicants were single men and 21% single women.

**Figure 5.4 Homeless Applications in the Western Isles in 2016-2017 by Household Type**

5.4.4 Applications can be broken down further into age ranges over the past five years for the main applicant as shown at Chart 5.5 below. The overall numbers of young people presenting has declined with only 4 aged 16-17 presenting in 2016-2017.

**Figure 5.5 Homeless Age Groups 2012-2017**

5.4.5 The decrease in the overall number of young people presenting as homeless in the Western Isles is encouraging. However, this trend can only continue by increasing the existing range of options to provide support to young homeless people.

5.4.6 The Homelessness Service plays an active part in the Child Protection Committee and contributes to delivering the multi-agency Integrated Children’s Services Plan. The service is currently working in partnership with Education and Children’s Services to transition ‘The Old House’ in Stornoway from its previous use as homeless temporary accommodation to supported accommodation for up to four young people aged 16-26. This provision is currently in the process of being registered with the Care Inspectorate and while full managerial and financial responsibility will transfer to Education and Children’s Services once registration is completed the Homelessness Service will retain referral rights and participate in a multi-agency admissions panel.

5.4.7 Western Isles Foyer was established in 2003 with a focus on helping disadvantaged young people aged 16-25, who are homeless or in housing crisis. It provides access
to affordable accommodation, guidance and support, training and job search facilities. The Foyer’s objectives are:

- To alleviate hardship by the delivery of advice, information and support services;
- To enable young people make the transition from dependence to independence; and
- To secure education, training, employment, accommodation, health and other services appropriate to their needs.

And these are delivered through three main activities:

- Lifeshaper Project – helps develop independent living skills, including skills to access education, training and employment;
- Drop-in Centre – a facility (on Bayhead Street) for young people to access Foyer services such as IT/internet, a chance to socialise and access food and drink;
- Supported Accommodation - Foyer provides 10 self-contained, furnished units in Stornoway (leased from HHP) for young people. The Foyer staff support the young people with their tenancies.

5.4.8 The Foyer receives annual funding contributions from the Comhairle's Housing Services budget and also from the Education and Children’s Services Department. Apart from these core amounts, the Foyer is heavily reliant on support from charitable bodies.

5.4.9 The Comhairle also records the number of care leavers presenting as homeless, and in the year 2016-2017, 3% of applicants (4 young people) had been formerly looked after by the local authority in the past 5 years. The Comhairle figures compare favourably with the 6% of applicants who were formerly looked after children who applied as homeless across Scotland in 2016-2017.

**Figure 5-6 Formerly Looked After Children Presenting as Homeless in Western Isles 2016-2017**

5.4.10 Youth homelessness is one of the two priority areas for Homelessness Service activity in the years of this LHS.
5.4.11 The ethnic origin of homeless applicants in the Western Isles for 2015 to 2016 is shown at Figure 5-7 below. No applicants described themselves as a gypsy/traveller. Sixteen applicants stated that they had a physical disability. It is very difficult to make any detailed analysis of outcomes for homeless applicants by ethnic group given the small numbers presenting from minority groups, but there are no obvious areas of concern.

![Figure 5-7 Homeless Applications in the Western Isles by Ethnic Origin 2016-2017](image)

5.4.12 Nine applicants had previously been a member of the armed services with one having served less than 5 years ago.

5.4.13 14 applicants stated that they had slept rough in the 3 months preceding making a homeless application, with 9 of these saying that they had slept rough on the preceding night. The Western Isles has no long-term rough sleepers. Almost all instances of rough sleeping involve sleeping in a car or shed, or walking around waiting for the office to open the next day.

5.4.14 The main reason given for presenting as homeless continues to be a dispute within the household with 53% of applicants citing this as the reason for homelessness in 2016-2017.

5.4.15 Of those who presented for this reason, 43% stated that there was abuse in the relationship. Numbers of those disclosing domestic abuse rose from 18 households in 2014-2015 to 31 in 2016-2017. This increase in disclosures suggests that, rather than the incidences of domestic abuse increasing, ongoing partnership working to raise the awareness of domestic abuse is proving effective. The Homelessness Service is represented on the Domestic Abuse Forum to ensure effective partnership working to assist clients affected by this.

5.4.16 Throughout Scotland as a whole in 2016-2017, 30% of homelessness applications were because of a dispute in the household and 25% were because the applicant had been asked to leave.
5.4.17 Of the 136 households who applied in 2016-2017, 68 (50%) had been living with friends or relatives while 54 (40%) had been living in their own property (i.e. which they either rented or owned).

5.4.18 The Homelessness Service is represented on the Community Justice Partnership and is normally able to identify accommodation for offenders prior to their release, and offer appropriate support as part of an agreed package. There is currently no need for any bespoke provision and the service intends to work to the forthcoming national standard ‘Sustainable Housing Outcomes for Everyone’ (SHORE).

Figure 5.9 Prior Housing Circumstances of Applicants in the Western Isles 2016-2017

- 70 -
5.4.19 Underlying reasons for failing to maintain the household’s existing accommodation are also investigated, as shown at Figure 5-10. 10% of households stated that financial difficulties, debt or unemployment was a contributing factor to their homelessness, which is the same percentage as the previous 2 years.

5.4.20 16% of applicants in Scotland in 2016-2017 stated that this contributed to their homelessness. The Comhairle will monitor the ongoing impact of Welfare Reform and Universal Credit.

5.4.21 The main contributory factor given was mental health with 16% of all applicants stating that this was a contributing factor to their homelessness, a 60% increase on the previous year. Furthermore, 49 households (36% of all applicants) were identified as requiring support due to mental health issues.

5.4.22 A further 11 applicants stated that they required support due to a learning disability. This illustrates the continuing pressures on the Service both for staff and resources as a result of mental health issues and learning difficulties.

5.4.23 The OHHSCP are currently undertaking a comprehensive review and redesign of local Mental Health Service provision. Given the level of concern for the number of clients with mental health support needs who become homeless, difficulties in getting them rehoused and problems with tenancy sustainment, the Housing Services Team have been involved in the process from the outset and have identified the following issues and service gaps which apply pro-rata across the Islands, as do the suggestions for improvements:

- Lack of specialist supported accommodation facilities (both long and short term)
- Lack of risk assessment prior to temporary accommodation being provided and community support services failing to engage after it is in place
- There can be very significant delays in getting a capacity assessment carried out on individuals in homeless accommodation – there is one example of a 6 month delay between the initial GP assessment and psychiatrist’s assessment - during which time homelessness staff have had to deal with totally unacceptable behaviours by the client
- When a client has dual diagnosis, the addiction is regarded as the main issue, and accompanying mental health factors are not given due priority
- Getting a GP appointment for a client is increasingly difficult
- Getting a psychiatrist appointment for a client is even more problematic
- Cases appear to be increasingly complex, making it even more unacceptable that specialist community services are so limited and untrained staff are expected to cope

5.4.24 Suggested solutions to these gaps are:

- Specialist supported accommodation such as delivered by Ark Housing Association for clients with long-term complex needs
- Specialist supported accommodation for young people with mild learning disabilities
- Staffed crisis accommodation providing step up/step down facility for MH clients - could be floating support, but must be MH trained
- Befriending service to reduce client reliance on service staff to combat isolation and loneliness
- Arrangement to fast track GP and psychiatric appointments when the client is homeless
5.4.25 Mental Health Re-design is also flagged as a current significant issue in Chapter 6 on Independent Living and is one of the two focus areas for the Homelessness Service and partners in the term of this LHS.

Figure 5-10 Underlying Reasons for Failing to Maintain Accommodation in the Western Isles 2015-2016 and 2016-2017

![Figure 5-10 Underlying Reasons for Failing to Maintain Accommodation in the Western Isles 2015-2016 and 2016-2017]

5.5 Homelessness Assessments

5.5.1 In the year 2016-2017, 26 households resolved their homelessness or withdrew their application prior to an assessment being made, often due to a relationship breakdown being resolved. Six households were assessed as neither homeless nor potentially homeless. Contact was lost with four households. All households who applied were eligible for some form of assistance. Of the remaining 100 households assessed as homeless or potentially homeless, 92 were assessed as unintentionally homeless. A further 8 were found to be intentionally homeless.

Table 5-2 Assessments of Homelessness Applications 2014-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CNES</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>CNES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unintentionally homeless</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentionally homeless</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessed as not homeless</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost contact, withdrew etc.</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All assessments</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>35,886</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5.2 In the period 2016-2017, 7 households were assessed as unintentionally homeless with no local connection. All 7 were provided with temporary accommodation for a reasonable period of time to allow them to secure alternative accommodation.

5.6 Temporary Accommodation

5.6.1 There are presently 73 operational homeless temporary accommodation units throughout the Western Isles. The Comhairle provides 39 of these from its own
stock, leases a further 33 properties from HHP, and leases one property in Barra from the private sector. All units comply with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.

5.6.2 A key priority action of the previous Local Housing Strategy was to open a shared temporary accommodation unit by 2013/14. This action was met when The Acres became operational in September 2014. The Acres provides 24 en-suite rooms for adults (28 bed spaces) with communal kitchen, laundry and social facilities. This has led to a substantial decline in the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation as illustrated at Figure 5-11.

5.6.3 As of 2015/16 lengths of stay in all temporary accommodation has been recorded, not just for cases which have been closed in the year, but also for those who have been moved to alternative temporary accommodation in the year, resulting in an increase in the overall figures. The Comhairle aims to eradicate the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation by ensuring a sufficient supply of good quality and appropriate temporary accommodation. This may be facilitated by increasing its own discrete stock and also through agreeing a revised Service Level Agreement with HHP regarding the ongoing provision of units for temporary accommodation, although the Comhairle acknowledges that this only provides a tool for managing homelessness and that every property used as temporary accommodation is a property less for potential permanent allocation.

5.6.3 At the time of writing there is still great uncertainty regarding the implications of forthcoming welfare benefit changes for the provision of temporary and supported accommodation. Most clients are reliant on Housing Benefit to cover housing costs and the roll out of Universal Credit could be problematic for many. Of particular concern is the impact of the introduction of the Shared Room Rate for under 35’s. In an area with a scarcity of private sector rentals there is high risk of an increase in homelessness applications from those unable to source single person accommodation which costs less than the Cap level.

**Figure 5-11 Numbers of Cases Closed in the Year Provided with Temporary Accommodation in the Western Isles 2010-2017**

![Bar chart showing numbers of cases closed in the year provided with temporary accommodation from 2010 to 2017.](image)

5.6.4 In 2016-2017, the Comhairle accommodated 18 households in Bed and Breakfast accommodation with an average length of stay of 7.5 weeks, a decrease of 32% on the length of stay for 2015/16. Of all homeless households provided with Bed and Breakfast accommodation in this period, none breached the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order which restricts the use of Bed and Breakfast Accommodation for households with children or pregnant women.
5.6.5 A further 109 households were provided with furnished temporary accommodation, 39 of these in The Acres. Again, these figures reflect households whose cases have been closed or who have been moved in the year. The average lengths of stay in self-contained accommodation were 31.5 weeks and 17 weeks for The Acres. The overall lengths of stay for households in temporary accommodation is likely to increase due to the increasing pressure on available permanent stock, particularly for those households waiting for an offer of a 2 or 5 apartment tenancy.

![Figure 5-12 Lengths of Stay in Temporary Accommodation in the Western Isles for Closed Cases 2006-2017 (weeks)](image)

5.7 Permanent Accommodation

5.7.1 As at September 2017, 95 priority homeless households were awaiting an offer of permanent accommodation in order for the Comhairle’s duty to them to be fully discharged. This is a 13% decrease in the numbers waiting compared to the same date in 2015/16. In this period, 58 homeless households were provided with a permanent tenancy under homelessness legislation. This figure represents 28% of all allocations made in the Outer Hebrides, a decrease of 15% of all allocations made in the preceding year. Figure 5-13 shows the housing outcomes for all cases closed in 2015/16.

![Figure 5-13 Known Outcomes for Homeless Households in the Western Isles for Cases Closed in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017](image)
5.7.2 Stornoway continues to be the most pressurised area. Of all social housing allocations made in 2016/17 in Stornoway, 40% were to a statutory homeless household. HHP aims to allocate 50% of properties in Stornoway to homeless households, in line with Outcome 4.5 of the previous LHS. The greatest pressure is on the two apartment list. At present, 41 statutory homeless households are awaiting a two apartment property in Stornoway compared with 13 awaiting a 3 apartment, 6 awaiting a 4 apartment and 4 awaiting an offer of a 5 apartment property. Waiting list times for 2 and 5 apartment properties are the longest and this impacts on the number of allocations that HHP are making.

5.7.3 The average length of time taken to make a first offer of permanent housing to priority homeless households was 345 days in 2016/17, a 25% increase on the time taken in 2015/16. It took an average of 364 days, a 26% increase on the preceding year, for all priority homeless households to be housed as 12 households waited for a second offer. HHP aims to make a first offer of permanent housing to 25% of statutory homeless cases within 3 months from the date of the Comhairle's homelessness decision. In 2016/17, 26% of first offers were made within 3 months across the Outer Hebrides. 17% of first offers were made within three months across Lewis and Harris, and 36% of first offers were made within three months in Uist and Barra. The Comhairle will continue to work in partnership with HHP to ensure that every effort is made to achieve a reasonable balance of allocations being made to homeless households against those made to the general waiting list.

Figure 5-14 Housing and Homelessness Trends 2012-2017

5.8 Homeless Support Service

5.8.1 The Homeless Support Service continues to provide support to homeless and potentially homeless households in line with, and often beyond, the requirements of the Housing Support Duty. Support Plans are tailored to the individual client’s needs and, where relevant, support continues through to a permanent tenancy until all benefits and utilities are sorted and the household is settled. In 2016/17 there were 42 new referrals made to this service.

5.8.2 The support service has recently been restructured so that the same Officer deals with a client throughout their homelessness journey from assessment until permanent resettlement. Tenancy sustainment levels continue to be high with 90% of homeless applicants housed permanently under homelessness legislation in 2015-2016 sustaining their tenancy for more than one year. (Of the 6 tenancies that were not sustained none would be classed as a failed tenancy as there were valid reasons for the tenant moving to alternative accommodation). For all households housed by HHP in 2015-2016, 84% sustained their tenancy for more than one year.
5.8.3  In order to assist in preventing repeat homelessness for those households provided with permanent accommodation under homelessness legislation, the Comhairle has worked with local churches to provide starter packs, and recycles second-hand furniture provided by the general public, sometimes collecting donations and distributing to new tenants on the same day. In 2016-2017 the Comhairle assisted 16 households by providing second-hand furniture and will work with Scottish Churches Housing Action to revitalise the Local Starter Pack Scheme.

5.8.4  Rent deposits are used to prevent homelessness under the housing options approach where appropriate, thus reducing the amount of households requiring temporary accommodation and, as a result, the overall cost of bed and breakfast.

5.8.5  The operational practices in place ensure compliance with the relevant outcomes required by the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

5.9  Partnership Working

5.9.1  The Comhairle works closely with a number of partner agencies to ensure full provision of services including support, advice and information, is available to homeless households.

5.9.2  Households applying as homeless are asked if they have any of a number of support needs and are referred to partner agencies if appropriate. Referrals are only made if agreed by the applicant. Some households applying to the Homelessness Service are already open cases to partner agencies when they apply. Therefore, no new referral is made. Partner agencies include Adult Services, Education and Children’s Services, Health, the Foyer, the Trussell Trust Food Bank, Hebrides Alpha, Dochas and local Churches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Need</th>
<th>Number of Applicants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning disability</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical disability</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical condition</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug or alcohol dependency</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic housing management/</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independent living skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.9.3  The Homelessness Service continues to work in partnership with Education and Children’s Services in the provision of supported accommodation for young people in The Old House. It is anticipated that close partnership working will improve the outcomes for vulnerable young homeless people and those threatened with homelessness.

5.9.4  The Homelessness Service also continues to support the multi-agency Syrian Refugee Families Resettlement Planning Group by offering housing support to assist in the co-ordination of accommodation, services and ongoing support for the families prior to, during and after resettlement.

5.9.5  As well as contributing to the Health and Homelessness Action Plan for the Western Isles, the Comhairle continues to work with NHS Western Isles in providing hot meals from for homeless households. In the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, 52 NHS vouchers were distributed. A further 112 food vouchers (including 64 Christmas food...
parcels) were issued for the Trussell Trust Food Bank operated by New Wine Church, a slight decrease on the previous year’s figure of 121. The Comhairle canteen continues to provide leftover hot food to The Acres residents from Monday to Friday and Tesco now provide produce due to go out of date on a Saturday night.

5.10 Housing Options Hub

5.10.1 The Comhairle participates in the North and Islands Housing Options Hub which aims to meet at least quarterly. The Hub is focussed on delivering a 3 strand work plan up to April 2018 covering: Practice Exchange to embed Housing Options; Benchmarking and Performance Management; and Policy Analysis.

5.10.2 Despite the diversity of the member local authorities, this networking opportunity with peers has proven to be extremely useful when considering the development of local responses to issues of common concern across the wider region, and ensuring that our work is facilitating achievement of national outcomes, the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter, and our statutory duties.

5.10.3 The Scottish Government will continue to provide funding for the next year to enable the five Scottish Hubs to develop and progress action plans relating to housing options and homelessness prevention. This funding equates to £30,000 per Hub per year.

5.11 The Challenges We Face

5.11.1 There are inherent difficulties in developing preventative practices and sustainable housing options in a rural area with a high predominance of owner-occupation and only one mainstream social housing provider. Consideration of the outcomes of activity in the Homelessness Service during the years of the previous LHS along with an annual analysis of trends and identification of new and emerging issues has resulted in various areas of challenge being highlighted as priorities for action in the next few years.

- need to encourage more housing option approaches by identifying alternatives to the generally held perception that social housing is the most desirable outcome for those in housing need.
- serious lack of specialist support services for homeless clients with multiple and complex support needs which delay permanent tenancy allocation and threaten tenancy sustainment.
- lengthy stays in temporary accommodation awaiting suitable permanent housing, particularly for single people and large families
- imbalance of housing stock profile against needs of homeless clients impacting on achievement of the target of 50% of all HHP allocations within Stornoway are being made to homeless households.
- the ongoing impact of welfare reform and Universal Credit.
5.12 What We Intend to Do

Homeless Clients can Access a Range of Advice, Support and Appropriate Accommodation to Suit their Needs

5.12.1 The LHS consultation and follow up discussions with key stakeholders identified priority areas for concerted multi–agency efforts to address the range of high level challenges listed above, with a particular focus on better co-ordination of services in relation to youth homelessness and clients with mental health issues.

5.12.2 Priority will continue to be given to partnership working which achieves improvements in health outcomes for homeless clients and helps to reduce health inequalities. The re-introduction of a Homelessness Network Group will help ensure progress is made with these issues and will also facilitate the development of a new local Homelessness Strategy.

5.12.3 Progressing these actions will impinge particularly on local agendas relating to Health and Social Care, Independent Living, and increased Housing Supply. They will additionally specifically support the National Outcomes relating to: “A Well-Functioning Housing System”; “High Quality Sustainable Homes”; and “Homes That Meet People’s Needs”. In turn, these will influence the outcome regarding “Sustainable Communities”.

Potential Actions

- develop local Homelessness Strategy
- work with partners to achieve an accommodation mix (both temporary and permanent) which maximises client choice and mitigates adverse changes to the welfare benefit system.
- work with partners to develop new temporary accommodation options and long term supported accommodation options for clients with addictions.
- develop appropriately supported temporary accommodation for homeless clients with mental health needs in partnership with health and social care through the Mental Health Redesign Project
- develop long term accommodation provision for clients requiring low level support due to Learning Disabilities / Autism
- re-introduce local multi-agency homelessness network.
- expand and implement youth housing protocols within wider homelessness strategy.
- renew partnership approach to identifying and addressing the health needs of homeless clients.
- expand homelessness prevention work through development of an online Housing Options Guide.
- ensure homelessness is addressed in conjunction with wider Community Planning strategies e.g. social inclusion; Local Outcome Improvement Plan outcomes.
- support introduction of 1 bedroom and 4 bedroom properties into the new build programme.
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4 - INDEPENDENT LIVING

People can access services and accommodation which promotes and extends independent living

This chapter informs on the provision and development of specialist housing and housing related services across the Islands, sets out current challenges to maximising Independent Living and how the Comhairle and partners can address these over the lifespan of the LHS. Efforts to ensure our communities have access to appropriate accommodation and services will potentially positively impact on other corporate ambitions to reverse population decline and the demographic imbalance, regenerate and sustain rural communities, and improve housing quality and supply.

Throughout the lifespan of the LHS, the intended activity specifically supports National Outcomes relating to “Homes That Meet People’s Needs” and “Sustainable Communities” and will impact on the other 2 outcomes i.e. “A Well-Functioning Housing System” and “High Quality Sustainable Homes”.

6.1 Review of progress with Independent Living 2011-2016

6.1.1 Shared ambitions relating to the expansion of accommodation options and independent living were progressed in a variety of ways during the lifespan of the Strategy.

- the Ardseileach facility in Stornoway for Adults with Learning Disabilities has been redeveloped to provide supported accommodation units within a core and cluster model;
- the Autism Strategy was developed and includes aims of providing specialist supported accommodation in the local community for this client group for the first time;
- Ark Housing Association was commissioned as a specialist provider of floating support to adults with very complex needs in individual tenancies within the community;
- supported accommodation for older people is to be included in the forthcoming redevelopment of St Brendan’s Care Home in Barra;
- a comprehensive modernisation of the Home Care Service was undertaken to ensure its sustainability into the future in recognition of the continued wish of the majority of older people to be cared for in their own homes;
- the Comhairle has continued to invest heavily in the provision of Adaptations for private sector properties including the development of a Reablement Programme with OT services to encourage rehabilitation and speed up hospital discharges;
- HHP and Trust HA also maintained their commitment to funding adaptation works for their tenants;
- funding was maintained for the continuation of the Home Safety Scheme managed by the Care and Repair Service, of crucial importance, particularly to elderly people;
- The Housing Services Team participated in the introduction of local arrangements for the integration of Health and Social Care and produced a Housing Contribution Statement to direct future priorities which will facilitate achievement of the partnerships ambitions.
6.1.2 The LHS consultation and ongoing discussion with partners both within and external to the Comhairle concluded that the expansion of Independent Living options should be one of the principal drivers of the LHS 2016-2021, given the inherent part that adequate specialist housing provision and support services will play in progressing the overall health and social care agenda.

6.2 Context

6.2.1 Health and Social Care Integration has provided an opportunity to re-energise the local approach to meeting the challenges of an ageing population, increasing levels of frailty, rising demand for services and the difficult financial climate. The intention is to sustain the independence of those who use health and social care services by delivering more care based in the community; focusing more on preventing illness; and supporting those with long-term conditions to self-manage.

6.2.2 Housing input to the evolving arrangements for the integration of health and social care services has enabled data sharing, analysis, and the identification of local priorities to be carried out within a meaningful and holistic context and with the purpose of assisting the ambitions of the OHHSCP.

6.2.3 This chapter explores the local situation, identifies future challenges, and proposes realistic and relevant actions that can be taken by housing partners to expand Independent Living opportunities for Island residents based on consultation outcomes. It also reflects the findings of our Housing Need and Demand Assessment process in relation to the range of client groups recommended by Scottish Government:

- older people
- those with a physical disability
- those with a mental health condition
- people with a learning disability
- young people
- those leaving or requiring supported accommodation
- ethnic minorities, including migrants, refugees, and Gypsy/Travellers

6.2.4 The Outer Hebrides demographic outlook requires an emphasis on future services for older people. However, the LHS additionally looks at the needs and aspirations of these other client groups and for opportunities to expand specialist housing provision and related support services in a holistic and inclusive way.

6.3 Where We Are Now

6.3.1 The Outer Hebrides Health and Social Care Partnership has a vision that:

“By 2020 the people of the Outer Hebrides will be living longer, healthier lives at home, or in a homely setting. We will have an integrated health and social care system, which focuses on preventing ill-health, anticipating care needs and supporting recovery”.

6.3.2 They aim to achieve this by prioritising support for people to stay at home or in a homely setting as long as this is appropriate, and avoid the need for unplanned or emergency admission to hospital wherever possible.

6.3.3 Community Care in its widest sense is already well embedded throughout the Islands. It is increasingly being recognised by other professions that a warm, good condition property of a type appropriate to an individual’s needs is the central requirement for the enhanced delivery of successful home based services, and subsequently for achievement of the ambitions of the new OHHSCP.
6.3.4 The Housing and Population Profiles are detailed in Chapter 2 but some aspects of each are particularly pertinent to this chapter. In terms of population change in relation to specialist provision we need to be aware that over the next 15 years the size of our population will decrease and yet the number of older people is expected to increase, as well as the number of people with complex long-term conditions. This will require a redesign of health, social care and related services to meet the changing needs of our communities.

6.3.5 The older adult proportion of the population is projected to increase for all Health and Social Care Partnership areas in Scotland but is greatest in the Outer Hebrides, with 33.2% of the population predicted to be of pensionable age and over by 2039.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2039</th>
<th>Children (0-15)</th>
<th>Working age</th>
<th>Pensionable age and over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Isles</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumfries and...</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borders</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayrshire and...</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orkney</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shetland</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fife</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tayside</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forth Valley</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanarkshire</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater...</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grampian</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lothian</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Records of Scotland

6.3.6 73% of households are owner occupiers and the sector is currently comprised of 6000 pensioner households.

6.3.7 The impact of depopulation and an ageing society is that we will have a smaller workforce to support our health and social services, a smaller number of unpaid family carers, and a rise in numbers of people living alone.

6.3.8 Residential Care is most commonly accessed by very elderly people with a significant degree of dependence. However, the current estate is now inadequate in terms of numbers and some establishments are due for replacement and aspirations to introduce Extra Care Housing within a core and cluster model are being explored as an alternative. This provides new opportunities to look beyond the elderly group and extend the accommodation options of other clients requiring some level of support to live independently.
6.3.9 There is a high incidence of under occupation of properties by pensioner households and the latest Census estimates suggest that the Outer Hebrides already has the greatest proportion of lone pensioner households in Scotland - and this is likely to increase into the future. Together, these present a very challenging circumstance to support our older citizens into the future.

6.3.10 A significant percentage of pensioner households are in fuel poverty with as many as 68% of all pensioner households in this position, according to the latest National Housing Condition Survey. Life expectancy and improvements in death rates from conditions has been increasing among the more affluent rather than the disadvantaged which is contributing to a widening inequalities gap. The potential health and well-being issues for this growing sector of the Islands’ population, as well as presenting challenges to local Health Services, is an increasing concern.

Key Findings from Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2016

6.4 Accessible, Adapted, and Wheelchair Housing

6.4.1 The predominance of owner occupation and the tradition of elderly/vulnerable individuals remaining in their own homes with bespoke support packages, including the provision of adaptations, result in the Outer Hebrides having a minimal number of specifically designated special provision properties in the rented sector and an indeterminate number in the private sector.

6.4.2 Many properties will have multiple adaptations ranging from minor appliances to major structural works and our information on Accessible and Adapted and on Wheelchair housing is therefore not definitive but reflects the reactive and ad hoc individual approach to meeting the needs of vulnerable people which is traditional and appropriate to the Islands.

6.4.3 The two aspects of adapted and wheelchair accommodation are therefore best considered together as there is an inevitability that the information on them will overlap and may appear not to be robust.

6.4.4 Efforts to map the number of properties which have historically benefited from any level of adaptation have been only partially successful. On one level, this is recognised as a weakness as it hampers data provision and evidence gathering. However, the reality is that adaptations to private sector properties are unlikely to be re-used beyond the original client and if the house is re-sold the adaptation will in all probability be unused or removed.

6.4.5 In practice, knowing the number and detail of adapted properties is more important to the social rented sector, as it can make best use of them by matching property characteristics to appropriate applicants through their management processes.

6.4.6 Due to the variances of housing design in the private sector, some older properties are difficult, and hence very expensive to adapt, but the commitment to assisting people to stay within their own homes and communities ensures that the vast majority of requested works will be provided.

6.4.7 Funding for adaptation works remains tenure specific. The Comhairle provides mandatory and discretionary grant assistance for adaptations in the private sector, primarily delivered via the Care and Repair Service, while RSL adaptations are funded via a separate central Scottish Government budget. Inevitably this results in different criteria and arrangements for service delivery. The responsibility for this area of activity now lies with the Integration Joint Board which has developed SLA’s to ensure effective service provision continues across all housing sectors.

6.4.8 Adaptation provision is a high priority regardless of housing tenure. The response is, by the nature of housing stock and tenure, bespoke to the client, and there is local consensus that people’s needs are assessed within a satisfactory timescale and
addressed in a manner appropriate to their individual needs with “future proofing" considered as far as practicable.

6.4.9 While a great many works will be of a minor nature, every year there are also exceptional high need cases where extensive adaptations are carried out or new-build properties provided tailored to individual needs.

6.4.10 In 2015 - 2016 in the private sector 99 adaptations were delivered by the Western Isles Care and Repair service ranging from walk-in showers, stair lifts and access ramping.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adaptation</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level Access Shower</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stairlift</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramp/Access</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAS/Access</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAS/Stairlift</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stairlift/Door</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>87</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Western Isles C&R 2016

6.4.11 Cross tenure, the Scottish House Condition Survey 2013-2015 shows that 28% of dwellings in the Outer Hebrides have some form of adaptation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Household Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied</td>
<td>Social Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied</td>
<td>Social Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of LA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Private Rented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Scottish House Condition Survey 2013-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Household Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied</td>
<td>Social Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of LA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied</td>
<td>Social Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of LA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Private Rented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Scottish House Condition Survey 2013-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Household Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied</td>
<td>Social Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of LA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied</td>
<td>Social Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of LA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Private Rented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Scottish House Condition Survey 2013-2015
Table 6-6 Dwellings Requiring Adaptations by Household Attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Household Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eileen Siar</td>
<td>Owner-occupied</td>
<td>Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Housing</td>
<td>Pensioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private Rented</td>
<td>Adult Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eileen Siar</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Scottish House Condition Survey 2013-2015

6.4.12 The nature of the housing tenure split and the practice of ready response to the changing needs of residents through adaptations provision minimises the evidence available on demand for specially adapted properties and all categories of clients will be covered under the term “adapted” in the local context.

6.4.13 Where evidence is indicated by HHP waiting lists, the numbers are low and demands are routinely met through the affordable housing development programme.

6.4.14 All domestic new-build requires to be built in compliance with varying needs standards, regardless of tenure, ensuring the lifetime homes principle is adhered to.

6.4.15 In the social rented sector, HHP has very few flatted properties but a provision of mainstream ground floor accessible homes along with a small number of wheelchair, supported, sheltered and very sheltered properties which may also have additional adaptations.

6.5 Specialist Provision

6.5.1 The tradition of the extended family caring for older or vulnerable relatives, along with the availability of private sector repair and improvement grants and comprehensive home care packages, mean that historically there has been no strong demand for either sheltered or other forms of supported housing. There is no private sector sheltered housing.

6.5.2 The resultant lack of such accommodation options now needs to be addressed as the pattern of family caring changes, expectation of independent living opportunities increase and in response to demographic forecasts.

6.5.3 There could potentially also be increased demand over time arising from the demise of property improvement grants leading to a decline in private sector house condition.

6.5.4 However, the relatively low numbers of those requiring additional help to live independently (excluding the elderly) result in high costs for specialist provision, and have inhibited developments in the past.

6.5.5 It is hoped to overcome some of the practical and financial obstacles by looking at opportunities to address known service gaps through an Extra Care Housing Model in conjunction with re-provisioning of residential services for the elderly.

6.6 Sheltered Housing

6.6.1 Currently, Trust Housing Association operates two facilities in Stornoway, comprising a total of 60 units. One provides 29 very sheltered flats and the other provides 31 units of sheltered accommodation. Despite sporadic issues re void periods in the very sheltered provision the association makes a very valuable contribution to housing options for the elderly in the town area.

6.6.2 The Sheltered Housing estate owned by HHP has reduced from 153 to just 18 as at 31 March 2016.

6.6.3 This is the result of reducing demand (particularly in rural areas) over the last 15 years, leading to empty properties being allocated to mainstream applicants and, additionally, the expansion of community alarm systems, which led to the removal of on-site wardens and the subsequent re-designation of sheltered schemes at most of the original sites.
6.6.4 Current demand for sheltered housing remains low and turnover as demonstrated by HHP allocation history is in single figures.

6.7 Supported Housing

6.7.1 There are currently 3 residential supported housing projects located in the Stornoway Area. The client numbers are low. The figures below are as at November 2016:

- Ardselleach Community Houses (provide long-term supported living for 6 adults with severe learning disabilities – provided by the Comhairle and staffed 24/7). These will be incorporated into a new and core and cluster provision in summer 2017.
- Crossreach – a 5 client project commissioned by the Comhairle for those with milder learning disability or mental health problems – intended as a short-medium term facility, with residents moving on to their own accommodation when ready. Not staffed 24/7 but out of hours links with community alarm service.
- Alpha – provides 24/7 supported accommodation linked to therapeutic employment for 6 clients recovering from alcohol/substance addictions. Funded by the Comhairle and the Outer Hebrides Alcohol Drug Partnership. Again intended as interim accommodation with clients returning or moving to their own accommodation when appropriate.

6.7.2 Mainland Placements – necessary for those individuals requiring intensive or highly specialist services which it is not feasible to provide locally. This may be learning disability, physical disability or mental health - funding by Comhairle and/or NHS Western Isles as appropriate to case.

6.8 Residential Care

6.8.1 There are 9 Residential Care facilities throughout the Outer Hebrides, 4 in Stornoway, 2 in Harris, 2 in the Uists and one in Barra, providing a total of 182 beds. The resident population tends to be over 78 years of age at admission and suffering a significant degree of frailty. This is deemed to be a result of successful care at home (both formal and informal) allowing people to live independently in the community for longer.

6.8.2 The care homes themselves range from the old - Dun Berisay in Stornoway was built in the 1960s - to the very new - Harris House has 16 beds and was opened in 2014.

6.8.3 There is significant pressure on care home bed availability in Lewis and Harris and with worrying demographics, the nature and level of future residential care provision is high on the priority list of health and social care commissioners.

6.8.4 Recent re-provisioning has addressed the residential care needs of Uist, Barra and Harris, but two of the Comhairle owned Care Homes in Stornoway (Lewis) are now due for replacement.

6.8.5 Under the auspices of the Integration Joint Board a cross-agency Residential Care Review Group has carried out an Options Appraisal to inform consideration of replacement plans for these two establishments.

6.8.6 The approach adopted considered an options appraisal factoring in an increase of 24 units to address 60% of the current unmet need. It is prudent to generally allow for a level of unmet need to be retained. Applying this calculation would require re-design proposals to consider a total indicative figure of 99 placements in an initial phase of re-design of services.
6.8.7 Variable factors such as single occupancy households, prevalence of long-term conditions, mental health conditions, family and carer support and life changing unforeseen events all impact on the need to consider the appropriateness of 24/7 care services. Commissioning services to meet all current and projected need through traditional residential care services would require unprecedented growth in revenue budgets.

6.8.8 The appraisal concluded that a core and cluster model would potentially provide a care model mix of residential/nursing care services coupled with the flexibility of extra care housing. This will enhance the options and capacity available to the IJB to improve the outcomes of those currently receiving care and those who will require it in the future. It also widens options for other client groups for whom there is currently little or no supported provision and the possibility of a mixed use development is under consideration, which would help address the gaps identified below.

6.8.9 The initial re-provisioning project is likely to be in Stornoway with further phases in rural Lewis in the future, and there is commitment to exploring the inclusion of inter-generational aspects within the plans.

6.9 **Supported Housing Service Gaps**

6.9.1 There is commitment to addressing service gaps to widen housing options for clients with mental health needs, dementia, learning disabilities, autism, and addictions through provision of extra care/supported accommodation, as relevant to the client group. This is articulated in the Housing Contribution Statement element of the OHHSCP Strategic Plan.

6.9.2 These have all been explored in conjunction with the residential review/extra care housing aspirations and a comprehensive mental health services re-design exercise which reported in November 2016.

6.9.3 The Homelessness Service highlighted that the service gaps and issues relating to the delivery of community services for clients with mental health issues have been identified by the Housing Team over many years. These can be strongly evidenced by the experience of the homeless service in dealing with a growing number of affected clients. They apply pro-rata across the islands, as do the suggestions for improvements and the housing specific issues are:

- Lack of specialist supported accommodation facilities (both long and short term)
- Lack of risk assessment prior to temporary accommodation being provided and community support services failing to engage after it is in place
- Significant delays in getting a capacity assessment carried out on individuals in homeless accommodation
- Cases are increasingly complex, making it even more unacceptable that specialist community services are so limited

6.9.4 In 2016/2017 16% of applicants to the Homelessness Service identified mental health problems as an underlying cause of their homelessness at the outset. This equates to 22 households.

6.9.5 However, in the course of the support need assessment the number of households stating that they required support because of their mental health rose to 49. At almost 36% of total applicants, this is a significant number. It represents 60% more than in 2015/2016.

6.9.6 A further 11 applicants in 2016/17 stated that they required support due to a learning disability.
These figures illustrate the continuing pressures on the Service both for staff and accommodation resources as a result of mental health issues and learning difficulties.

The Outer Hebrides Autism Action Plan highlights the requirement for a mapping exercise on housing requirements for people with autism, ideally within a holistic life planning approach with the goal of providing access to a range of appropriate independent living support across their lifespan.

**Care/Support for Independent Living at Home**

6.10.1 The delivery of care and support to older and other vulnerable people to enable them to live independently in their own homes relies on a network of linked professionals across the NHS, Comhairle, Third and independent sectors.

6.10.2 As well as medical, nursing and therapeutic care, staff provide home care, community alarms, meals delivery, care and repair services, minor works and home safety schemes, core social work services and welfare benefits advice. The majority of service users reside in private sector properties, or mainstream social rented properties.

**Specialist Community Based Housing Support** - services within individual homes currently comprise:

- **Ark Housing Association** - bespoke services at home for adults with complex needs - predominantly mental health related - 5 clients
- **Penumbra** – community based service for adults with mental health issues - one client receiving services at home plus an active drop-in centre
- **Homeless Support** - delivered Islands-wide by Homeless Service staff - 41 clients in 2016-17

**Home Care** - is the key service in supporting older and other vulnerable people to remain at home and nationally the level of care at home provision has been declining over the last ten years, thought to be due to the policy emphasis on personal care rather than domestic tasks. However, the level of care at home provided by the Comhairle has remained consistently higher than the national average. In 2013-2014, the level of care at home provided in the Western Isles was 70 per 1000 older people compared with 53 per 1000 older people for Scotland as a whole.
6.10.3 During 2015/2016 the average number of clients receiving home care services at any point was 432. However, there are significant challenges in meeting the assessed need and demand for care at home services. At any time a number of people will be waiting for a care at home package. This is a problem across the islands but is most acute in some of the most remote and rural areas and is exacerbated by care at home staff having to travel very large distances to visit their clients.

6.10.4 A comprehensive service redesign exercise has been implemented in an attempt to encourage new people into the service by introducing new career pathways and rationalising working practices.

6.10.5 Comhairle nan Eilean Siar performs well in terms of the proportion of intensive care packages that are delivered within the person’s own home. When viewed as the proportion of the over 65 population that live within their own homes in the Western Isles, the authority continues to exceed the Scottish average.

6.10.6 Telecare - we are improving our use of technology to support personal independence and prolong living at home. Over 800 people in the Western Isles have a community alarm or other telecare service, which is higher per capita usage than the national average. Typical equipment provided includes smoke detectors, door monitoring devices, door entry systems, heat, flood, gas, and fall detectors and medication dispensers, all of which can be linked to the community alarm system. There is a commitment to expanding the number of community alarms by 15% per year until everyone over 75 years of age, assessed as potentially benefiting from an alarm, has one installed. There is a dependence on unpaid informal carers ensuring that effective response is timeously available to alarm alerts.

6.11 Mental Health Redesign

A comprehensive review and redesign of local Mental Health Service provision is being progressed by the OHHSCP. Given the level of concern for the number of clients with mental health support needs who become homeless, difficulties in getting them rehoused and problems with tenancy sustainment, the Housing Services Team have been involved in the process from the outset.

6.11.1 The intention of the service redesign is to develop modern, integrated mental health services that meet the needs of the population of the Western Isles, are available for emergency care at all times, and make the best use of the resources of the statutory, private and third sector agencies that currently address people’s needs. It is anticipated that the redesign will lead to the amount of resource that is provided for mental health being used more effectively, that this will not decrease and would ideally wish it to increase. However, the current Scottish and UK financial situations are unlikely to allow for service development in the near future.

6.11.2 Given the impact on the Homelessness Service and with the aim of expanding safe and sustainable Independent Living opportunities there will be continued Housing input to the process during the period of this LHS. (Additional detail is provided in Chapter 5).

6.12 Gypsy/Traveller Site Provision

6.12.1 The LHS 2011-2016 refers to the zero demand for site provision and related care and support services for Gypsy/Travellers. This remains unchanged.

6.12.2 The Local Development Plan 2012 (Policy 14) and Supplementary Guidance on Caravans and Temporary Buildings 2012 carry a strong presumption against the use of caravans and mobile homes as residences. However, in compliance with national policy their use is permitted in exceptional circumstances including to meet the needs of travelling people.
6.12.3 Planning Enforcement - any unauthorised change of land use may be subject to the Comhairle's Planning Enforcement procedures and could apply to travellers visiting briefly to do seasonal work.

6.12.4 The local planning policies referred to above provide the context to allow identification and appropriate development of sites for Gypsy/Travellers if there is proven need in the future.

6.12.5 It has not been necessary to develop care and support services for Gypsy/Travellers but there is an understanding of the corporate responsibility and ad hoc arrangements would be put in place if required.

6.12.6 The 2011 Census reported a total of 10 inhabitants of the Outer Hebrides recording their ethnicity as Gypsy/Traveller.

6.12.7 At the time of the last Census, 4 of these were under 15 years of age. The gender and age breakdown was:

```
Table 6-7 Gypsy Traveller
Outer Hebrides 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group (years)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1M 1F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1M 1F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Census 2011
```

6.12.8 These residents are not currently living a Gypsy/Traveller lifestyle (and have not been for a significant period). They have made no approach to the Comhairle for services to enable this.

6.12.9 In 2015-2016 one homeless applicant in Lewis stated their origin as Gypsy/Traveller and the case was duly recorded in Scottish Government returns.

6.12.10 However, the individual was not seeking services under this category, and routine checks showed the information to be false.

6.12.11 From anecdote we know there are other established families of Gypsy/Traveller origin but clearly they no longer primarily identify themselves as such.

6.12.12 Occasionally, a small number of travelling families visit the area in the summer months and undertake a few weeks of casual work before moving on. Again, they do not seek out a serviced site or designated encampment during their stay.
6.12.13 The Comhairle is fully aware of the rights of Gypsy/Travellers and the responsibilities of the authority towards them. However, in the total absence of any evidence of demand for formal provision of services there remains no justification for the considerable resource outlay that would be required. There are, therefore, currently no designated sites within the Outer Hebrides or plans to create any.

6.12.14 Travelling Show People come very infrequently to the Islands. Their visits are pre-arranged and of short duration allowing appropriate ground to be designated as temporary show sites in line with local planning policy.

6.12.15 The OHHSCP are considering the potential for a “Safe and Independent at Home” initiative based on prevention principles, with a view to stopping needs escalating and thus promoting and extending Independent Living amongst elderly and other vulnerable client groups.

6.12.16 It is envisaged that the project would have three strands:

- Improving the flow and sharing of information on vulnerable clients
- Building community capacity and improving linkages between support functions
- Creating a “One Stop Shop” for access to advice on housing services, and improvements to homes.

6.12.16 It is recognised that this is a Community Planning issue, with implications for data sharing and the development of multi-disciplinary teams. The Comhairle’s Housing Services Team will input to further discussion on the model in support of the Independent Living theme.

6.13 Future Need Estimates

6.13.1 The forecast data reported here was collated for use by the OHHSCP to support future service commissioning of specific Social Care Services and is based on reported provision, not demand. Statistical evidence is not currently available for all categories of property or client groups but it is clear that the age demographic of the population of the Outer Hebrides will continue to increase and that this will cause a knock on rise in the need for home care, residential care, and related services. Many of the Islands over 65s live alone in the private sector and this trend is likely to continue and contribute to particular issues for housing and care in the future. For those remaining at home there is likely to be an increase in demand for specialist and adapted housing and this will be a key challenge to determine and provide going forward. The following categories are of particular note at this point.

Residential Care

6.13.2 In terms of long-term projected demand for residential care, it is estimated that by 2040 a total of 206 more residential places would be required for Lewis alone. An indicative need for 99 units has been identified as an immediate need related to the re-provisioning project referred to previously.

Extra Care Housing

6.13.3 66 Extra Care housing units have been included in the SHIP 2018-2021. These will support the elderly care re-provisioning mentioned above, provide a new housing option to other client groups by addressing recognised service gaps, and allow the housing model to be introduced within rural Lewis. The geographic split is yet to be determined, as is the ratio of residential units to housing units in the Stornoway project.
Sheltered Housing

6.13.4 It is not currently anticipated that there will be any significant increase in demand for traditional sheltered housing unless as an adverse consequence of housing quality decline in the private sector over time. The profile of the small number of current applicants shows that most have applied as a ‘safety net’ against future changes in circumstances rather than an urgent need.

Adaptations

6.13.5 The 2016 Scottish House Condition Survey reports that an overall 28% of properties across all tenures of Island housing are already adapted to some extent and that a further 5% are assessed as currently requiring some adaptation.

6.13.6 The local Private Sector Survey (2016) estimated that 1327 households are affected by long-term illness or disability, with 1125 of these indicating mobility problems within their current dwelling. 515 (45.8%) of these properties have been adapted and 610 are yet to be adapted. The affected households are mainly elderly, and as private sector is the predominant tenure, this figure is a good indication of the numbers of works which may be required in future years.

6.14 The Challenges We Face

6.14.1 Through ongoing Housing input to various multi-agency forums and workstreams relating to different aspects of the Health and Social Care agenda, along with the outcomes of our LHS consultation and the HNDA findings, we have identified a number of key challenges to inform the priorities for the coming 5 years.

- wide implications of ageing population demographic on demand for health, social care and related housing services which enable extended care at home
- funding restraints on expansion of service provision
- high fuel poverty levels amongst elderly households
- requirement to modernise residential care provision
- successful introduction of Extra Care Housing Model for elderly
- addressing housing options gaps for other groups requiring specialist provision

6.15 What We Intend to Do

People can Access Services and Accommodation which Promotes and Extends Independent Living

6.15.1 The anticipated specific role of housing in addressing the numerous challenges identified in this chapter and assisting achievement of the OHHSCP objectives to promote and extend Independent Living is set out in the Housing Contribution Statement (HCS) which is an integral part of the Strategic Plan. The HCS is provided as an Appendix to this LHS.

6.15.2 The HCS was developed through consideration of information arising from the Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2016, and an overview of activity related to provision and spends on adaptations and preventative services, housing waiting...
lists, current provision and demand for adapted properties. Along with an analysis of the level and nature of local homelessness provided by the Comhairle, and evidence gathered from partnership groups on perceived service gaps, a comprehensive evidence base allowed priority housing related issues to be agreed:

- The continuing need for adequate funding for adaptations provision across all housing tenures and for the preventative work of schemes such as Care and Repair, Minor Works and Home Safety.
- The ongoing commitment to improving energy efficiency and general house condition, particularly in the private sector, with a view to maximizing the potential to maintain older and vulnerable people in their own homes for as long as appropriate.
- Continuing work towards reducing fuel poverty across all housing tenures and targeting particularly vulnerable households whenever possible.
- Maintaining social rented sector new build housing development throughout the Islands (with ongoing provision of specially adapted properties within these as appropriate to demand) through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP).
- Seeking to introduce an Extra Care Housing model with flexible 24/7 health and social care input as an alternative to traditional residential care, opening up new possibilities for older people to remain in a homely environment for longer.
- Addressing service gaps to widen housing options for clients with mental health needs, dementia, learning disabilities, autism, and addictions through provision of extra care/supported accommodation, as relevant to the client group.
- Retain and sustain an adequate supply of non-permanent housing for homeless persons and families, care leavers, victims of domestic violence, students, migrant workers, asylum seekers, etc.
- At an early stage identifying the potential for the AHSP to contribute to the provision of these enhanced accommodation models as well as additional/alternative funding sources.
- Also at an early stage identifying potential funders and providers of the required support services for any new specialist accommodation.

6.15.3 The HCS was used to facilitate the LHS consultation and the resulting draft actions identified as appropriate mechanisms to support and deliver on this following assessment of the consultation feedback.

6.15.4 Implementation of the intended actions will assist the wider local agendas relating to sustaining communities and progressing the ambitions of the OHHSCP. They will also primarily address the National Outcomes - “Homes That Meet People’s Needs” and “Sustainable Communities”, while contributing to each of the others: - “A Well-Functioning Housing System” and “High Quality Sustainable Homes”.

**Potential Actions**

- identify priorities and develop responses to promote independent living through the Housing Contribution Statement.
- ensure adequate funding to enable adaptations provision to high need clients.
- investigate feasibility of a mechanism to introduce lower level adaptations including telehealth/telecare to the older population in general.
• address gaps in housing provision for client groups requiring support to maintain successful independent living.
• maintain input to introducing an extra care housing model within Lewis residential care re-provisioning.
• monitor implications of proposed housing benefit cap on affordability of existing supported housing and potential impact on planned new provision.
• investigate joint initiative with public health to identify groups particularly vulnerable to the health effects of poor housing, allowing their needs to be prioritised.
• extend Home Safety and Minor Works schemes to help speed up hospital discharges.
• address independent living issues related to housing transitions amongst young people (16-25)
• contribute towards development of an Independent Living Prevention Strategy.

6.16 Conclusion

6.16.1 This LHS describes the current characteristics and challenges of the Outer Hebrides’ unique Housing System and sets out the ambitions of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and our partner agencies for the delivery of housing and related services across all tenures in the years 2017-2022. Implementation of the Strategy will facilitate achievement of wider corporate objectives relating to population retention, the regeneration of rural communities and the expansion of health and social care services in the face of challenging demographics, and will be updated as these impinging agendas develop.

6.16.2 The outcomes and actions detailed in this document provide a framework for joint working which will optimise the use of resources and local expertise. The Strategy ensures that our core statutory responsibilities to: tackle fuel poverty; improve house conditions and energy efficiency; reduce homelessness; and provide housing support; along with a plethora of other housing related issues, are addressed in a manner appropriate to the local context while also supporting Scottish Government National Outcomes and Targets.
### OUTCOME ACTION PLAN TEMPLATES

#### Outcome 1:
Communities are Sustained and Re-vitalised through Improvements to Housing Quality, Condition, and Energy Efficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Indicator/Measure</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Target/Milestone</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Responsible Person</th>
<th>Progress Update</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consider reinstatement of targeted grant assistance for private sector properties</td>
<td>Total investment available</td>
<td>Capital Programme 2011-17</td>
<td>Continued reduction in BTS</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>CnES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider targeting grants at empty houses and linking with population initiatives</td>
<td>Reduction in number of empty homes</td>
<td>CnES Private Sector House Condition Survey</td>
<td>5 per year</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>CnES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue partnership approach to maximising resources for fuel poverty/energy efficiency measures across all housing tenures within the wider Fuel Poverty Action Plan</td>
<td>Reduction in fuel poverty</td>
<td>Scottish House Condition Survey</td>
<td>Bring closer to national average</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>CnES &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribute to development of local energy Supply Company</td>
<td>Company established</td>
<td>Reliance on national energy company</td>
<td>Progress made</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>CnES &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase investment in services to assist the care at home agenda</td>
<td>Level of funding available</td>
<td>Capital Programme 2011-17 £500k per annum</td>
<td>Care &amp; Repair – 100 cases Minor Works – 120 cases</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>CnES/IJB/Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue support for achieving single housing funding resource through enthusiasm for potential single pot of housing funding through “Our Islands Our Futures “.</td>
<td>Single funding resource achieved</td>
<td>Current housing funding resource</td>
<td>Resource realised</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>CnES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop &quot;one stop shop&quot; for advice and information on housing repair and maintenance, energy efficiency, home safety and related financial issues</td>
<td>Range of advice available</td>
<td>Range of current advice sources</td>
<td>‘One Stop Shop’ established</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>CnES and Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Outcome 2: Housing Supply is Sufficient to Support People's Needs and Aspirations and Assist Wider Corporate Aims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Indicator/Measure</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Target/Milestone</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Responsible Person</th>
<th>Progress Update</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery of 217 Social Rented properties (as per SHIP)</td>
<td>Number of new units completed</td>
<td>SHIP figures</td>
<td>3 year SLP</td>
<td>2022-23</td>
<td>CnES &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery of 52 Shared Equity properties (as per SHIP)</td>
<td>Number of new units completed</td>
<td>SHIP figures</td>
<td>3 year SLP</td>
<td>2022-23</td>
<td>CnES &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that provision of new affordable housing meets the needs of both the Stornoway/Broad Bay area and the rural areas and that location, type and size will support wider agendas</td>
<td>Programme numbers determined in line with policy decisions</td>
<td>Geographical split in line with SHIP</td>
<td>Developments achieved as per programme target</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>CnES &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with Community Landowners towards provision of new housing within their areas including bringing empty homes back into effective use</td>
<td>Development Programme initiated</td>
<td>Investigation opportunity with community landlords</td>
<td>New developments in community landlord areas</td>
<td>2017-2022</td>
<td>CnES &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop land bank targets for affordable housing, including in partnership with community landowners for rural areas</td>
<td>Number of sites acquired</td>
<td>Current land bank</td>
<td>5 additional sites</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>CnES &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate and support self-build and assisted first time buyer initiatives such as Open Market Shared Equity and Rent to Buy with local partners, including community landowners</td>
<td>Develop initiatives</td>
<td>No current local initiatives</td>
<td>20 units</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>CnES &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with partners to provide Extra Care housing and expansion of supported housing options for vulnerable client groups</td>
<td>ECH development on site</td>
<td>No current extra care provision</td>
<td>66 units developed</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>CnES/IJB/NHS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop opportunities to introduce new tenures such as mid-market rent through working with local agencies</td>
<td>New tenure initiatives are launched</td>
<td>No current mid-market rent or very low rent to buy available</td>
<td>New developments underway</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>CnES &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 3:</td>
<td>Homeless Clients can Access a Range of Advice, Support and Appropriate Accommodation to Suit their Need</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
<td><strong>Indicator/Measure</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with partners to achieve an accommodation mix (both temporary and permanent) which maximises client choice and mitigates adverse changes to the welfare benefit system</td>
<td>Wider variety of housing options available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with partners to develop new temporary accommodation options and long term supported accommodation options for clients with addictions</td>
<td>Increase in supported units</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop appropriately supported temporary accommodation for homeless clients with mental health needs in partnership with health and social care</td>
<td>Increase in supported units</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Baseline</strong></td>
<td><strong>Target/ Milestone</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wider variety of housing options available</td>
<td>Current stock profile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal provision currently</td>
<td>Clients able to access more suitable accommodation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal provision currently</td>
<td>Clients able to access more suitable accommodation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timescale</strong></td>
<td><strong>Responsible Person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>CnES &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>CnES/IJB/NHS &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>CnES/IJB/NHS &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Progress Update</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>Responsible Bodies</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop long term accommodation provision for clients requiring low level support due to Learning Disabilities/ Autism</td>
<td>Increase in supported units</td>
<td>Minimal provision currently</td>
<td>Clients able to access more suitable accommodation</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>CnES/IJB/ NHS &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-introduce local multi-agency homelessness network</td>
<td>Network re-established</td>
<td>Network not currently operational</td>
<td>Network feeding into Homelessness Strategy</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>CnES &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand and implement youth housing protocols within wider homelessness strategy</td>
<td>Protocols developed</td>
<td>Current operational structure</td>
<td>Protocols operational</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>CnES &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve partnership approach to identifying and addressing the health needs of homeless clients</td>
<td>Development of improved protocols</td>
<td>Current operational structure</td>
<td>Protocols operational</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>CnES/IJB/ NHS &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand homelessness prevention work through development of an online Housing Options Guide</td>
<td>Impact on housing options</td>
<td>Current housing options</td>
<td>Increase in successful housing options outcomes</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>CnES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure homelessness is addressed in conjunction with wider Community Planning strategies e.g. social inclusion; Local Outcome Improvement Plan outcomes</td>
<td>New strategic approach developed</td>
<td>Current strategic approach</td>
<td>Homelessness becomes embedded in other local Strategies</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>CnES &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce smaller properties into the new build programme</td>
<td>Increase in number of one and two bedroom properties</td>
<td>Current housing stock profile</td>
<td>Reduction in time spent in temporary accommodation</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>CnES &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support introduction of 1 bedroom and 4 bedroom properties into the new build programme</td>
<td>Provision of 1 and 4 bedroom properties within AHSP</td>
<td>Stock profile</td>
<td>Increase in supply</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>CnES &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Indicator/ Measure</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>Target/ Milestone</td>
<td>Timescale</td>
<td>Responsible Person</td>
<td>Progress Update</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify priorities and develop responses to promote independent living through the Housing Contribution Statement</td>
<td>Elements of Statement being implemented</td>
<td>Housing Contribution Statement</td>
<td>Reviewed and updated in line with IJB Plan</td>
<td>As required</td>
<td>CnES/IJB &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure adequate funding to enable adaptations provision to high need clients</td>
<td>Increase in funding</td>
<td>Capital Programme 2011-17</td>
<td>High need clients adaptations are met</td>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>CnES/IJB &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate feasibility of a mechanism to introduce lower level adaptations including telehealth/ telecare to the older population in general</td>
<td>Number of households receiving preventative adaptations</td>
<td>Current usage</td>
<td>Increase in measures</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>CnES/IJB &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address gaps in housing provision for client groups requiring support to maintain successful independent living</td>
<td>Number and range of support mechanisms increased</td>
<td>Current housing support provision</td>
<td>Increase in provision</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>CnES/IJB &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain input to introducing an extra care housing model within Lewis residential care re-provisioning</td>
<td>Housing Services continue to contribute to workstream</td>
<td>Current involvement</td>
<td>Successful introduction</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>CnES/IJB &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor implications of proposed housing benefit cap on affordability of existing supported housing and potential impact on planned new provision</td>
<td>Impact identified</td>
<td>Current engagement with Housing Benefits</td>
<td>Financial situation clarified to allow full project costings</td>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>CnES/IJB &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribute towards development of an Independent Living Prevention Strategy</td>
<td>Strategy developed</td>
<td>Current working protocols</td>
<td>Prevention principles embedded in multi-agency procedures</td>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>CnES/IJB &amp; Partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

In relation to each of the four themes, the most common consultation responses were:

a) Housing Quality

- support for re-instatement of targeted grant assistance for private sector properties and also for developing services to support owners in using their own resources to address home maintenance and repair
- suggestion for targeting grants at empty houses and linking with population initiatives.
- support for continued partnership approach to maximising investment for fuel poverty/energy efficiency measures across all housing tenures.
- importance placed on all activities aimed at reducing Fuel Poverty levels – e.g. income maximisation and domestic fuel price lobbying.
- support for progressing local energy supply company as soon as possible.
- importance of good quality housing to success of the health and social care agenda re care at home, as well as to the impact on individual health condition.
- enthusiasm for potential single pot of housing funding through “Our Islands Our Futures” – seen as a means to mitigating the additional restrictions on croft house owners accessing finance as well as setting local priorities within wider agenda e.g.: initiatives to address population issues; funding to facilitate health and social care strategy.
- support for concept of “one stop shop” for advice and information on housing repair and maintenance, energy efficiency, home safety and related financial issues.

b) Housing Supply

- high level of interest from Community Landowners in provision of new housing within their areas.
- significant interest in self - build and assisted first time buyer initiatives – again potentially through community landowners assisting with land supply – and through development of initiatives such as Open Market Shared Equity and Rent to Buy with local partners.
- opportunities to introduce new tenures such as mid - market rent through working with local agencies – these could be targeted on key workers / skilled workforce to assist population / migration agenda as well as widening options for current population.
- support new supply of student accommodation – links with population agenda.
- support for provision of “extra care” housing and expansion of supported housing options for vulnerable client groups.
- call for a “starter homes” (1 bedroom) within new social rented developments, cited as particularly important for rural areas.
- significant agreement among respondents that provision of new affordable housing should be more equitable between Stornoway / Broad Bay area and rural areas – seen as potentially helping address the population drift towards Stornoway.
- concern raised that high demand for social rented / shared equity properties in Stornoway area is because there is no alternative on offer elsewhere.
- also concern that many people do not apply to waiting lists because of lengthy waiting times and lack of new social housing in some areas.
- community landowners also interested in potential Empty Homes Projects - these could help depopulation issues and increase private rented sector.
- general support for Empty Homes project but with caveats re economic viability/value for money and location issues.
- again wide support for single housing fund, providing ability to tailor investment to specific local initiatives.
- interest in developing the private rented sector.
c) Homelessness

- concern regarding lack of single person accommodation adversely impacting on clients moving on to permanent housing.
- changes to welfare benefit system potentially damaging to client accommodation options in both private and social rented sectors – suggestion of potential to provided shared accommodation to mitigate effects
- aspirations to develop both temporary accommodation options and long term supported accommodation options for clients with addictions.
- wish to develop appropriately supported temporary accommodation for homeless clients with mental health needs, ongoing support for these clients in mainstream housing, and permanent accommodation with support for those with e.g. low level learning disabilities / autism – all in conjunction with Mental Health Re-design plans – this crosses over to the Independent Living theme.
- support for re-introducing local network to analyse current levels and nature of homelessness, improve data collection and sharing and thus identify local priorities and facilitate joint working practices to address these.
- concern regarding current lack of specific and joined - up policy approach to needs of young homeless people, particularly in relation to preventing homelessness and appropriate move on accommodation.
- support for renewed partnership approach to identifying and addressing the health needs of homeless clients.
- wish to develop appropriately supported temporary accommodation for homeless clients with mental health needs, ongoing support for these clients in mainstream housing, and permanent accommodation with support for those with e.g. low level learning disabilities / autism – all in conjunction with Mental Health Re-design plans – this crosses over to the Independent Living theme.
- support for re-introducing local network to analyse current levels and nature of homelessness, improve data collection and sharing and thus identify local priorities and facilitate joint working practices to address these.
- concern regarding current lack of specific and joined - up policy approach to needs of young homeless people, particularly in relation to preventing homelessness and appropriate move on accommodation.
- support for renewed partnership approach to identifying and addressing the health needs of homeless clients.
- support for pro-active work on homelessness prevention through development of an online Housing Options Guide.
- wish to see homelessness addressed in conjunction with wider Community Planning strategies e.g. social inclusion; LOIP outcomes.

d) Independent Living

- support for continuing to jointly identify priorities and develop responses to promote independent living in partnership with the Integration Joint Board through the Housing Contribution Statement.
- support for continued emphasis on enabling adaptations provision to high need clients but wish to also develop a way of introducing lower level adaptations which assist with care at home and safe independent living to the older population in general.
- strong support for ambitions to address housing option gaps for client groups requiring support to maintain successful independent living e.g. addictions; mental health.
- support for extra care housing model within Lewis residential care re – provisioning.
- concern regarding proposed housing benefit cap on supported housing and potential impact on planned new provision.
- suggestion of joint initiative with public health to gather more information on any population groups within our communities who may be particularly vulnerable to the health effects of poor housing, allowing their needs to be prioritised.
- suggestion of extending Home Safety and Minor Works schemes to help speed up hospital discharges.
- need to address independent living issues related to housing transitions amongst young people (16-25) – this in part links to youth homelessness but could also benefit population retention efforts.

Consideration of the consultation responses clearly validates continuing to develop the new LHS on the basis of the four themes of Housing Quality, Supply, Homelessness, and Independent Living.

Many respondents highlighted the potential for the LHS to support efforts to redress the population and demographic imbalance and the crucial linkages with the strategic objectives of the Health and Social Care Partnership. Through these, the opportunity exists for housing activity to meaningfully facilitate achievement of the community planning priorities as identified through the ongoing development of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and process and the Corporate Plan.

Based on this clear direction from stakeholders, it is intended that the LHS 2017-2022 should be based on supporting the population and health/social care agendas through the four agreed themes.
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Equality and Diversity
Full Impact Assessment Toolkit

Local Housing Strategy

2017
STEP ONE
Define the Aims of the Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Policy</th>
<th>Local Housing Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department/Section</td>
<td>Development Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead Officer</td>
<td>Isobel MacKenzie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Full Assessment</td>
<td>September 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is this a new or existing policy? (please tick as appropriate)</th>
<th>New</th>
<th>Existing √</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the purpose of the proposed policy (or changes to be made to the policy)?</td>
<td>The development of a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) is a statutory requirement in terms of Section 89 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. The LHS 2017-22 was prepared in compliance with Scottish Government guidance on the preparation of a LHS and the preparation of a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA). It is underpinned by a continuing programme of policy analysis and review. The LHS sets out the priorities of the Comhairle and its partners for achieving our housing outcomes over the 5 year lifespan of the strategy. These priorities have been informed by the HNDA as well as by the responses of stakeholders and local residents to a consultation exercise. As the local authority’s principal strategic housing document it covers national and local priorities with respect to housing supply, stock condition and fuel poverty in both the public and private sectors, homelessness prevention and alleviation, and independent living.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is affected by the policy or who is intended to benefit from the proposed policy and how?</td>
<td>The Strategy will potentially affect all households currently living in the Outer Hebrides or who aspire to live there. It will positively affect some groups more than others (e.g. older people, homeless persons, clients with housing support needs) by outlining specific intentions to address their housing needs but it does not adversely discriminate directly or otherwise against any of the Equalities Groups.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How have you, or will you, put the policy into practice, and who is or will be responsible for delivering it?</td>
<td>The Comhairle has a statutory duty to monitor the LHS and for ensuring its implementation through programmes delivered in co-operation with partner organisations. Local partners include Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP) and Tighean Innse Gall (TIG). National partners include the Scottish Government and agencies such as the Energy Savings Trust. Ongoing monitoring and review of the LHS is the responsibility of the Housing Services Team and the Communities and Housing Strategic Member Officer Working Group.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How does the policy fit into our wider or related policy initiatives?

The LHS 2017-2022 will support the priorities of the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership in relation to Regeneration and Population Retention in rural areas, and the provision of expanded and improved Health and Social Care Services. It is also aligned to the three overarching strategic priorities of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and the complementary Corporate Plan:
1) Sustainable population – the Outer Hebrides retains and attracts people to ensure a sustainable population.
2) Sustainable economy – the Outer Hebrides has sustainable economic growth and all our people have access to appropriate employment opportunities.
3) Improving quality of life and wellbeing – the Outer Hebrides offer attractive opportunities that improve the quality of life, wellbeing and health for all our people.

The LHS has informed and been informed by the Housing policies within the Local Development Plan and the strategic direction takes account of Scottish Government's national housing priorities.

Do you have a set budget for this work?

The Housing Service has an annual budget set by the Comhairle, but the implementation of the strategy also depends on accessing a range of external resources including Scottish Government grant funds, the budgets of partner organisations, including HHP and TIG, and contributions from individual households where appropriate.

---

**STEP TWO**  
**What Do We Know?**

**What information do you know about the diverse needs and/or experiences of your target audience?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA) was carried out in line with Scottish Government guidance. It highlighted an ageing demographic and the importance of expanded and improved services delivered in an integrated and holistic way to improve outcomes for older people. The re-provisioning of Residential Care Services in Lewis incorporating Extra Care Housing is a priority within the LHS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The HNDA evidence also showed a population imbalance as a result of younger people leaving the islands due to lack of employment opportunities and the impact of this on accessing housing options. In particular, lower than average income levels and welfare benefit restrictions make it more difficult for some younger households to secure housing solutions for themselves in the mainstream housing system.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consultation

Discussions on the content of the Strategy began during consultation on the HNDA in 2016 and continued throughout the LHS process. Regular sessions were held with key stakeholders overseen by the Local Housing Strategy Member Officer Working Group. Additionally, officers of the housing strategy team are members of key professional groupings which afforded ongoing consultation opportunities.

The formal LHS consultation phase ran from January to March 2017 and was conducted using a range of media to ensure engagement with as many local communities, interest groups and individuals as possible and that the composition of the local population was accurately reflected in the process, remembering that some people’s views may not be readily heard through using the traditional engagement methods.

Advertisements and information briefings were published in the local press, community newspapers, and the Comhairle website. A stakeholder survey was made available in hard copy at key community locations as well as online.

A series of meetings and workshops, including for Comhairle Members and internal stakeholders, were offered to a mix of community and professional groups, while discussions at existing liaison groups such as the Adult Protection Committee, Alcohol and Drug Partnership and various sub–groups of the Health and Social Care Partnership and programmed partnership meetings ensured the inclusion of external agencies. The consultation sessions were tailored to the remit of each audience and additional detailed discussions with potential partners were held in April and May 2017.

In terms of equalities, members of the Diversity and Equality Steering Group (DESG) were invited to communicate with the groups they represent in order to ascertain any perceived gaps in the proposed strategy in terms of housing supply and/or housing services. Views and experiences on difficulties their members had encountered in accessing housing services were also sought.

Consultation feedback has shaped the LHS priorities in relation to older people. In particular consultation stressed a need to ensure adaptations and other housing support services support the home care re-ablement priorities of the IJB.
Consultation and good practice evidence has also pointed to a need for housing education in schools, and more tailored information and advice that covers all housing options.

**Disability**

**Evidence**

The HNDA confirms a continuing and increasing requirement for adaptations, which play an important role in assisting disabled people to live independently in their own home. There may be a significant demand for bespoke wheelchair housing in the future given demographic trends. The potential for further use of Telehealth and Telecare technologies was identified and it also pointed to a shortfall in supported housing for adults with disabilities, particularly those with learning difficulties.

**Consultation**

The LHS priorities reflect feedback from the consultation process described above (see under age) and were developed with input from the IJB. The wider consultation process confirmed that the provision of adaptations is an important issue for older households and carers. It also reinforced the need to improve the housing options available to people with disabilities and to maximise the use of assistive technologies.

Provision has also been made to ensure the LHS document will be available in different formats for people with particular disabilities.

**Gender**

**Evidence**

Housing needs and demand experiences generally relate to households which either include both genders or where gender is not relevant. That said, specific issues relating to gender can result from household dissolution.

**Consultation**

Members of the Diversity and Equality Steering Group (DESG) did not identify any specific gender relate housing issues.

However, the delivery of the Housing Strategy may have a positive impact on men to the extent that they are at higher risk of becoming homeless because of relationship breakdown and more likely to require support in resettlement. Likewise, it will potentially have a positive impact on women to the extent that a large proportion of the population that tend to require an integrated package of housing support and care are older widowed women.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual &amp; Transgender</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The HNDA highlighted the potential risk of discrimination and harassment in terms of service delivery but found no evidence that such problems occur in the Outer Hebrides.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members of DESG did not inform of any specific housing issues in respect of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups that required a strategy response through the LHS.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The HNDA reports that in 2011 just under 1% of the Outer Hebrides population were from minority ethnic backgrounds.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultations through the DESG and the Western Isles Learning Shop (which provides English language education) did not highlight any specific housing issues but did highlight continued language barriers. Provision has therefore been made to ensure the LHS document can be made available in different languages on request.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion and Belief</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence regarding the religion and belief of customers using housing services is not routinely collected.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members of DESG did not identify any specific housing issues in respect of religion or belief but there are no obvious areas for concern.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other (e.g. employees, poverty, pregnant women, persons with caring responsibilities)

### Evidence
The HNDA indicates that a high proportion of tenants are on low income, disabled or vulnerable.

### Consultation
Consultation stakeholders included the Community Care Forum which represents a variety of 3rd Sector Health and Social Care providers, including the local Carers Network. Feedback confirmed that amongst their clients there remains a widespread concern about the impact of Welfare Reform.

The LHS recognises that ongoing work is needed to mitigate the potential effects of this on the equality groups.

### STEP THREE

**Do You Have Enough Information to Help You Understand the Diverse Needs and/or Experiences of Your Target Audience?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is further information required?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>√</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If yes, what else do you need to know?</td>
<td>The HNDA draws on data from a wide range of existing sources. This included equalities and diversity monitoring data collected through housing services such as the homeless service and the HHP housing register. The diversity monitoring data did not highlight any issues regarding the take up of services but reinforces the importance of maintaining adequate monitoring systems to reflect the Equalities Act, 2010 and of the ability and willingness of partners to share their information.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is there any further consultation planned or required?</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What were the outcomes of the consultation and engagement undertaken?</th>
<th>The consultation process confirmed the following priorities for equalities groups, which are reflected in the strategy document:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Need for expansion of both care at home and residential services for older people given demographic trends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need to expand housing options for special needs groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need to address fuel poverty across tenures and general housing quality in private sector</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need to maintain increase in affordable housing supply</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wish for the LHS to support wider corporate and CPP priorities re population and health and social care.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Identified Impacts: List All Impacts That Have Been Identified

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tick as appropriate</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual &amp; Transgender</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion and Belief</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households affected by Fuel Poverty</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless Persons</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Age**

The LHS describes how the Housing Service will support the IJB to reprovision residential care services in Lewis and introduce an Extra Care Housing element.

Adaptations and related services will be maintained to promote independent living in conjunction with other care at home provision.

Initiatives will be developed to increase housing options for young people including those with particular needs.

**Disability**

The LHS includes plans to provide additional supported tenancy opportunities for a range of client groups, including through alignment with ongoing work on Mental Health services redesign.

**Gender**

Not applicable

**Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender**

Not applicable

**Race**

Not applicable

**Religion and Belief**

Not applicable

**Homeless Households**

The LHS describes the Comhairle’s plans to prevent homelessness and ensure appropriate assistance to those who do become homeless.

**Households affected by Fuel Poverty**

The LHS sets out the intention to support national initiatives and to develop or facilitate local initiatives, to alleviate the incidence of fuel poverty amongst Island households.
STEP FIVE
Will You be Making Any Changes to Your Policy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are there any changes?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual &amp; Transgender</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion and Belief</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please identify:
- what action you will take;
- who will take that action; and
- when that action will be taken

The LHS is a high-level five-year strategy document that provides the framework for more specific activities and is aligned to a National Housing Outcomes Framework and CPP priorities. Many of these activities will be developed in partnership with other agencies, and as such the potential programme of work to be implemented will be subject to resource availability, shifts in Scottish Government policy and the prioritisation of local issues.

The implementation and ongoing monitoring of the LHS is the responsibility of the Communities and Housing Strategic Member Officer Working Group, which will report on progress and any proposed amendments to the overall strategy to the parent committee on an annual basis. The remit of this group includes responsibility for ensuring no detrimental equalities consequences flow from proposed or adopted changes to the Strategy.

STEP SIX
Identified Opportunities to Promote Equality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How does the policy promote equality of opportunity?</th>
<th>The LHS sets the framework for ensuring all households in the Outer Hebrides live in safe, secure and suitable accommodation according to their preferences. It promotes a range of support types targeted towards those requiring assistance to maximize access to and sustainment of independent living.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does the policy promote good relations?</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does this policy have the potential to cause unlawful direct or indirect discrimination? Does this policy have the potential to exclude certain group of people from obtaining services, or limit their participation any aspect of public life?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP SEVEN
Based on the Work You Have Done - Rate the Level of Relevance of Your Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tick one box for each strand</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>LGBT</th>
<th>Religion and belief</th>
<th>Race</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- There is substantial evidence that people from different groups or communities are (or could be) differently affected by the policy (positively or negatively).</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- There is substantial public concern about the policy, or concerns have been raised about the policy’s potential impact by relevant bodies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The policy is relevant to all or part of the respective general duty, in the case of race, disability and gender.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Medium</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- There is some evidence that people from different groups or communities are (or could be) differently affected (positively or negatively).</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- There is some public concern about the policy.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The policy is relevant to parts of the respective general duty, in the case of race, disability and gender.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Low</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- There is little or no evidence that some people from different groups or communities are (or could be) differently affected (positively or negatively).</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- There is little or no evidence of public concern about the policy.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The policy has little or no relevance to the respective general duty, in the case of race, disability and gender.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unknown</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- No evidence or data has been collected therefore an assessment cannot be made</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**STEP EIGHT**  
**Monitoring & Evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please explain how monitoring will be undertaken, when it will take place and who is responsible for undertaking it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will you know what the actual effect of the policy is?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In what ways will you monitor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often will monitoring information be analysed and published?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When will you review the policy taking into account any monitoring information?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of next review:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publish Assessment Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the arrangements for providing feedback to those involved in the process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will you ensure the wider public knows the outcomes of your impact assessment, consultation and monitoring?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will you ensure access to the full impact assessment report?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sign off and Authorisation

You should have completed the following steps:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact Assessment Steps 1-8</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Defined the aims of your policy</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identified what we already know (i.e. what does the existing evidence base tell us?)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Identified what more we need to know (i.e. what gaps have we identified in our evidence base?)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Analysed the evidence (i.e. what does this all mean in relation to our policies?)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Considered any necessary changes &amp; identified action (i.e. will you be taking action to make any changes? If yes, what, when and who? If not, what are your reasons for not taking any action?)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Identified opportunities to promote equality</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Measured differential impact</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Outlined arrangements for monitoring &amp; evaluation</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Authorisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Title</th>
<th>Local Housing Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department/Section</td>
<td>Development Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy.</td>
<td>Name: Isobel MacKenzie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Position: Housing Strategy and Development Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Date: September 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authorisation by Director or equivalent</th>
<th>Name: Calum Iain Maciver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Position: Director of Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Date: September 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has a duty as the “Responsible Authority” in terms of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 to determine whether delivery of the Local Housing Strategy will cause any significant environmental impact and on that basis to decide whether a full SEA is required.

The Comhairle therefore undertook a pre-screening exercise as prescribed in Schedule 2 of the Act at LHS consultation stage and submitted this to the SEA Gateway.

The pre-screening notification stated that the LHS 2017-2022 will further develop the achievements and efforts of earlier strategies as well as addressing current national outcomes. Although it sets out intentions for new housing supply, and plans for the improvement of housing quality, the delivery of the LHS is considered to potentially have a minimal environmental impact.

This conclusion is based on the fact that the LHS is linked to and reflects the aims of a number of other plans and strategies and does not in itself dictate or influence land use. Rather, the location, scale and nature of any new housing developments or other housing improvement activity will continue to be informed by the policies of the Local Development Plan (LDP), which is subject to a full Environmental Assessment.

Significantly, this LHS has been developed in tandem with a new Local Development Plan which is currently out for consultation. An SEA was undertaken at Main Issues and Proposed Plan stages and a formal statement will be issued on adoption of the Final Plan.

No representations were made by the consultation authorities in response to the pre-screening submission and the Comhairle is therefore satisfied that the LHS will not in itself have significant environmental effects and that the overarching Local Development Plan is the principal related strategy requiring full SEA.

September 2017
HOUSING CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT MARCH 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HCS Theme</th>
<th>The Local Housing Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Briefly articulate the role of the local housing sector in the governance arrangements for the integration of health & social care. | The intended governance structures developed by Western Isles Health and Social Care Partnership seek to ensure that the unique nature of the local Housing system is appropriately represented.  

77% of households are owner occupiers and the sector is currently comprised of 6,000 pensioner households. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar undertook a whole stock transfer in 2006 and the 15% of households in the social rented sector are managed by one mainstream Housing Association (Hebridean Housing Partnership) (HHP), set up to receive the local authority housing stock and by Trust Housing Association which provides specialist Sheltered Housing for elderly and vulnerable individuals. The private rented sector is comprised largely of single property landlords and has no organised identity.  

There is no housing representation on the Integration Board, but membership of the Strategic Planning Group recognises:- the Comhairle’s ongoing strategic housing role and responsibilities for homelessness and private sector housing: Tighean Innse Gall (TIG) represents the crucial role of Care and Repair and its ancillary projects in delivering adaptations and other preventative services which assist in maintaining private sector households in their own homes: the social rented sector is represented by HHP, acknowledging the responsibilities to tenants and also the potential for contribution to the development of new particular needs housing developments through affordable housing funding.  

Locality Planning Groups are to be established in five localities in order to ensure adequate geographic coverage: Barra and Vatersay; the Uists and Benbecula; Harris; Rural Lewis; and Stornoway and Broadbay. It has not been determined that housing will be specifically represented on these groups but it is envisaged that there will be input as required. |

(Note 1)
Membership of the Local Housing Strategy Member Officer Working Group includes Health and Social Care Staff involved in Integration. This has helped maximise understanding of the two agendas and ensured a joint approach to strategic needs assessment and data analysis, service priorities and the potential for new housing developments relating to the health and social care agenda. This group has a monitoring remit regarding LHS implementation so by default will monitor any housing related activity linked to the Strategic Commissioning Plan.

Historically, Comhairle Housing Strategy staff have attended the Health and Social care committee in an advisory capacity and it is anticipated that this will continue when the committee is replaced by the IJB.

There is also a plethora of partnership forums related to specific client groups which have housing input from the Comhairle and other housing partners. These have facilitated the understanding of the links between housing, health, and social care over many years and enabled the development of joint initiatives for the benefit of mutual clients and the wider community.

2. Provide a brief overview of the shared evidence base and key issues identified in relation to housing needs and the link with health & social care needs.

(Note 2)

As detailed above there is significant housing input to the work of the Strategic Planning Group ensuring that the Strategic Commissioning Plan aligns with the current Local Housing Strategy (LHS) and Local Development Plan, and the forthcoming updates of these.

The Outer Hebrides Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2011-2016 (HND A) has provided context and baseline figures for the planning process, updated as appropriate in response to new releases of national statistics. This document is currently being reviewed, and the collation of updated information has allowed us to share recent locally generated data with the Planning Group, and prior to the formal establishment of that group with various multi-agency officer led forums.

The two housing associations and TIG have provided an overview of activity related to provision and spend on adaptations and preventative services, housing waiting lists, current provision and demand for adapted properties. Along with an analysis of the
level and nature of local homelessness provided by the Comhairle, and evidence gathered from the numerous partnership groups referred to above on perceived service gaps, a comprehensive evidence base on housing issues has been considered.

This has been considered by the planning group alongside the “Strategic Health and Social Care Needs Assessment - epidemiological overview and service utilisation review” – produced by the Public Health Intelligence & Information services Department of NHS Western Isles

Taken together our evidence has allowed us to identify housing activity which will assist achievement of the aims of the IJB, highlight any potential early impact on the Strategic Housing Investment Plan, and identify potential outcomes in relation to Independent Living for inclusion in the next LHS.

The agreed priority housing related issues to be included in the Strategic Commissioning Plan, the LHS and associated corporate documents reflect the housing tenure, population and demographic characteristics of the Western Isles and are:-

- The continuing need for adequate funding for adaptations provision across all housing tenures and for the preventative work of schemes such as Care and Repair, Minor Works and Home Safety.

- The ongoing commitment to improving energy efficiency and general house condition particularly in the private sector, with a view to maximising the potential to maintain older and vulnerable people in their own homes for as long as appropriate.

- Continuing work towards reducing Fuel Poverty across all housing tenures and targeting particularly vulnerable households whenever possible.

- Maintaining social rented sector new build housing development throughout the Islands (with ongoing provision of specially adapted
properties within these as appropriate to demand) through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP).

- Seeking to introduce an Extra Care Housing model with flexible 24/7 health and social care input as an alternative to traditional residential care opening up new possibilities for older people to remain in a homely environment for longer.

- Addressing service gaps to widen housing options for clients with mental health needs, dementia, learning disabilities, autism, and addictions through provision of extra care /supported accommodation, as relevant to the client group.

- At an early stage identifying the potential for the AHSP to contribute to the provision of these enhanced accommodation models as well as additional / alternative funding sources.

- Also at an early stage identifying potential funders and providers of the required support services for any new specialist accommodation.

3. Set out the shared outcomes and service priorities linking the Strategic Commissioning Plan and Local Housing Strategy.

(Note 3) The Outer Hebrides Local Housing Strategy 2011-2016 (LHS) recognises that good quality housing and housing services play a central role in the social, economic and physical well-being of the area population and identifies five priority outcomes:

- More households live in good quality, dry, warm, and energy efficient housing that minimises the risk of fuel poverty and contributes to a reduction in carbon emissions

- The balance between housing supply and demand is improved so that more households can secure a suitable home in their preferred area at a price they can afford

- More people can secure the housing services they require to live independently in their preferred choice of accommodation.

- Fewer households become homeless but those...
that do are assisted to secure and maintain permanent accommodation.

- High quality information and advice is readily available to help households to make the best possible housing choices at different times in their life.

The LHS is closely aligned to the ambitions of the Single Outcome Agreement, a number of other corporate documents in particular the Development Plan, as well as partnership agreements. It also matches the aspirations of the national housing strategy for Older People entitled “Age Home and Community”

The emphasis in the strategic direction of the two housing documents is on housing quality and the expansion of independent living choices. These clearly align to assisting attainment of the Health and Social Care Partnership vision in relation to the development of high quality sustainable and integrated care for vulnerable client groups in the community.

The links are articulated in the Strategic Commissioning Plan in the priority area of Housing and Community Capacity. The associated key deliverables set out the intention to:

- diversify from the traditional residential care model and provide additional community capacity in Extra Care Housing with flexible care services available on a 24/7 basis. This proposal will introduce new accommodation options for older and other vulnerable client groups and potentially create a bespoke local model for the ongoing replacement programme of current residential facilities

- work with partners to ensure the existing housing stock is maintained and adapted to a standard which supports people to live at home for as long as possible. This broad objective relates not only to the provision of property adaptations but also to general housing quality improvement and our efforts to reduce Fuel Poverty. It applies equally to all housing tenures and all geographic areas of the Western Isles. Funding for private sector
Housing adaptations and related services will transfer to the IJB on April 1, 2016, while separate arrangements will be made between the two Housing Associations and the IJB to ensure the ongoing delivery of adaptations and other assistive services within the social rented sector.

A new Local Housing Strategy is to be developed for the period 2017–2022. This will provide the opportunity to set out specific actions, outcomes and timescales which clearly identify how the housing related priorities of the IJB can be progressed and evidence the strong links with the Strategic Commissioning Plan.

4. Provide an overview of the housing-related challenges going forward and improvements required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified challenges to achievement of the Housing related ambitions of the IJB are;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Older People demographic - forecast is for an increase in elderly population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Growing demand for housing adaptations and corresponding pressure on the available budget. <strong>Solution: A sustained increase in the budget</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase in vulnerable homeless clients requiring specialist support. <strong>Solution: Provision of additional supported/extra care housing and appropriate support services</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Balance the demand for affordable housing with the requirement for reprovisioning of supported sheltered housing. <strong>Solution: refocus AHSP beyond current commitment to prioritise the provision of Extra Care Housing.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pressure on Comhairle and Hebridean Housing Partnership to support / contribute to the Scottish Govt funding for the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) <strong>Solution: On-going lobbying for resources particularly to progress the Integration agenda</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High levels of Fuel Poverty and corresponding health implications. <strong>Solution: On-going lobbying for resources in order to fully implement the Outer Hebrides Fuel Poverty...</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Action Plan

- The impact of the removal of Improvement and Repair Grants, due to legislative changes, on the condition of the private housing sector, which could mitigate against the expansion of home based care. **Solution: Enhancement of Care and Repair advice role regarding alternative funding.**

- The on-going Welfare Reform agenda in relation to Housing Benefits for supported accommodation. **Solution: Ensure availability of Welfare Advice.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Set out the current and future resource and investment required to meet these shared outcomes and priorities. Identify where these will be funded from the Integration Authority's integrated budget and where they will be funded by other (housing) resources. <em>(Note 5)</em></th>
<th>Housing Related Budgets 2016/17:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Private Sector Housing (funded by CNES)</em></td>
<td>Major Adaptations (Capital): £425k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTS Housing (Capital): £175k</td>
<td>Small Adaptations (Capital): £75k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Works (Capital): £75k</td>
<td>Care &amp; Repair (Revenue): £308k – to IJB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Rented Housing</td>
<td><strong>HHP: £300k (2015/16) - similar being bid for 2016/17</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust Housing:</td>
<td><strong>Trust Housing:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing Supply Programme (SG Grant): Currently @£2.4m per year between 2015-2018 and already committed to projects. Extra care agenda may have to be factored in after 2018.</td>
<td><strong>SG Fuel Poverty Funding (HEEPS): £1.7m in 15/16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note 1:** Integration Authorities are required to set out the involvement and role of the Local Authority Housing Service, Housing Associations and other housing providers and interests in the governance arrangements for the Health & Social Care Partnership. This should be set out clearly taking into account the various levels of potential involvement in relevant structures such...
as the Integration Authority, Strategic Planning and Locality Planning. It could also include reference to wider consultation or partnership structures with the housing sector.

**Note 2:** This should briefly highlight the connection between evidence assembled through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (and any associated local housing evidence). It should identify the main housing-related issues for various groups that require a housing contribution to improve health and well-being. For example older people, homeless, disabled people, mental health or other relevant groups. It should also outline any gaps in the joint evidence base and proposals for addressing these.

**Note 3:** This section should highlight the direct link between the outcomes and service priorities identified in the Strategic Commissioning Plan and the Local Housing Strategy. It should be clear how the housing sector is going to contribute to meeting the outcomes and service priorities in the SCP (which in turn should reflect the contribution to the nine national health and well-being outcomes). Consideration of potential changes to housing services and provision should be part of this.

**Note 4:** This should set out any challenges identified in the housing system and among providers in improving the housing contribution to health and well-being. Proposals for addressing these challenges should be clearly articulated.

**Note 5:** This should outline the impact on resources and investment required to deliver the HCS element of the SCP. Consideration should be given to both services and the bricks and mortar element of housing both currently and in the future (at least over the 3 years of the SCP). It should clearly identify key housing resource and investment areas required to implement the SCP and deliver associated shared outcomes and priorities. Examples would include activities associated with adaptations, homelessness and housing support as well as any planned new housing provision to meet particular needs.

**Note 6:** This section is for Integration Authorities to provide any other additional information that in their view is relevant for their Housing Contribution Statement.
## GLOSSARY/ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Affordable Housing</strong></th>
<th>Housing that can be bought or rented for less money than it would cost on the open market.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AHSP</strong></td>
<td><strong>Affordable Housing Supply Programme</strong>&lt;br&gt;The principal Scottish Government grant funding for local authority and housing association new build developments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BTS</strong></td>
<td><strong>Below Tolerable Standard</strong>&lt;br&gt;The term used to define houses failing to meet a minimum Repairs Standard as set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Care and Repair</strong></td>
<td>A scheme for older people and people with disabilities living in private housing which assists them through the provision of information and advice with regard to repairs and improvements and adaptations to their homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate Strategy</strong></td>
<td>The Corporate Strategy sets the strategic direction of the Comhairle in each council term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CM Plan</strong></td>
<td><strong>Carbon Management Plan</strong>&lt;br&gt;The local authority’s plan for the reduction of carbon emissions and improved energy efficiency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CnES</strong></td>
<td><strong>Comhairle nan Eilean Siar</strong>&lt;br&gt;The formal registered business title of the local authority, formerly known as Western Isles Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHGS</strong></td>
<td><strong>Croft House Grant Scheme</strong>&lt;br&gt;Scottish Government grants for crofters to improve and maintain the standards of crofter housing, with the aim of attracting and retaining people within the crofting areas of Scotland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECO</strong></td>
<td><strong>Energy Company Obligation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Funding from Energy Companies used for fuel poverty measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EESSH</strong></td>
<td><strong>Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing</strong>&lt;br&gt;A measure introduced by the Scottish Government to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ESCO</strong></td>
<td><strong>Outer Hebrides Energy Supply Company</strong>&lt;br&gt;A Comhairle led initiative to facilitate the purchase of commercial onshore wind electricity generation for retail to the local community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EPC</strong></td>
<td><strong>Energy Performance Certificate</strong>&lt;br&gt;A document which states the energy efficiency of a building. It is a legal requirement to provide an EPC to any prospective buyer or tenant of a property when it is either sold or rented out.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Equity
Net wealth invested in residential property, i.e. the value of a property minus the owner’s outstanding mortgage balance.

Extra Care Housing
Housing which has all the features of the sheltered housing but also includes a dining room, other social facilities, specialist bathrooms and 24 hour access to housing support and personal care services.

Fuel Poverty
A household is defined to be in fuel poverty if more than 10% of its income is spent on fuel use.

PSHCS
Private Sector House Condition Survey
A representative survey of dwellings to inform affordability data and assist financial planning.

HEEPS
Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland
A Scottish Government package of support measures to help people heat their homes and pay their bills managed by local authorities.

HHP
Hebridean Housing Partnership
Housing Association created to facilitate the transfer of the whole local authority housing stock in 2006 and the sole mainstream RSL on the Islands.

HLA
Housing Land Audit
A comprehensive annual account of the current housing land supply organised by tenure and planning status.

HMO
Houses in Multiple Occupation
A property housing more than two families which is subject to licensing.

HMA
Housing Market Area
Geographical split of local authority area to represent household flow and market activity. Difficult to specify in rural areas.

HMP
Housing Market Partnership
Group responsible for overseeing production and sign off of HNDA and development and delivery of LHS.

HNDAD
Housing Needs and Demand Assessment
An analysis of projected housing requirements for an area.

Housing Contribution Statement
The Comhairle’s Statement of Intent for the direction of partnership working and future priorities in terms of housing.

IJB
Integrated Joint Board
Oversees work of the OHHSCP.

LDP
Local Development Plan
The Comhairle’s statutory land use planning framework for the Outer Hebrides. The LDP sets out policies and proposals for the development and use of land, and provides a basis for the assessment of planning applications.
LHS  Local Housing Strategy  
The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to undertake an assessment of all housing needs and conditions, and to produce strategies to tackle the housing problems in their areas.

LOIP  Local Outcome Improvement Plan  
This OHCPP Plan provides a vision and focus, based on agreed local priorities, to which partners will work systematically and collaboratively to meet the needs and aspirations of the communities of the Outer Hebrides.

MOWG  Member Officer Working Group  
A group comprising Comhairle Members and Officers, and other interested parties as required, established to discuss particular issues and reach conclusions prior to the Comhairle’s formal Committee procedures.

NHER  National Home Energy Rating  
This measure is designed to assess the energy rating of a dwelling on a scale of 0 (poor) to 10 (excellent). It is based on the total energy costs per square metre of floor area required to achieve a standard heating regime.

OHCPP  Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership  
An initiative bringing Comhairle nan Eilean Siar together with its partner organisations to develop a prosperous, well-educated and healthy community.

OHHSCP  Outer Hebrides Health and Social Care Partnership  
The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 provides the legislative framework for the integration of health and social care services in Scotland. It requires local authorities and health boards to integrate adult health and social care services. Like other areas of Scotland, this has been done in the Outer Hebrides through the creation of an Integration Joint Board (IJB), which is a partnership body designed to take decisions about how to invest resources and improve services.

OTS  Occupational Therapy Service  
Work with Comhairle to deliver aids and adaptations.

Priority Need  
The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 defined those to be regarded as in priority need. This was expanded by the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003. Priority Need was phased out by 2012, with anyone unintentionally homeless being allocated permanent accommodation.

PRS  Private Rented Sector  
Privately owned homes rented at market prices.

Reablement  
Services for people with poor physical or mental health or disability which help them live as independently as possible by learning or re-learning the skills necessary for daily living.
**RSL**
**Registered Social Landlord**
A non-profit making social housing provider registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator, generally a Housing Association.

**SAP**
**Standard Assessment Procedure**
A Government energy rating for homes.

**Scottish Social Housing Charter**
The Charter introduced in 2012 setting out standards for social housing landlords in Scotland. Monitoring of performance is carried out by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

**SEA**
**Strategic Environmental Assessment**
An impact assessment required under the Environmental (Scotland) Act 2005.

**SEEP**
**Scotland’s Energy Efficiency Programme**
A new Scottish Government programme to help local authorities to pilot new and innovative approaches to energy efficiency with community groups and businesses, helping reduce costs and improving warmth in homes, schools, hospitals and businesses.

**SoA**
**Scheme of Assistance**
The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 introduced a new Scheme of Assistance, replacing the previous system of local authority private sector home improvement grants. The scheme encourages home owners to take more responsibility for the condition of their homes.

**Sheltered Housing**
Housing which gives people the independence of having their own flat within an associated warden service and call duty system, controlled entry and communal facilities.

**SHIP**
**Strategic Housing Investment Plan**
The Plan, required to be submitted to the Scottish Government, builds upon the work of the HNDA and details the proposed development of affordable housing over a five year period.

**SHQS**
**Scottish Housing Quality Standard**
A housing standard required to be met by all social housing landlords by 2015.

**SOA**
**Single Outcome Agreement**
This sets out the local priorities for action by the Comhairle and Community Planning Partners in the context of the Scottish Government's national aspirations.

**Supported Living**
Where people occupy their own single or shared tenancy and are supported to sustain their tenancy and enabled to make decisions and choices about their personal and social life. Support can be for a few hours or up to 24 hours.

**TEAS**
**The Energy Advisory Service**
Local service delivered by TIG, providing practical advice for homeowners and community organisations on energy efficiency.
| **Telecare** | The range of equipment and services available to assist a person to remain safely in their own home, such as panic buttons, movement and fall detectors, etc. |
| **Tenure** | Housing tenure describes the legal status under which people have the right to occupy their accommodation, such as home ownership, rental, etc. |
| **TIG** | **Tighean Innse Gall**  
Local Housing Agency providing development services for the affordable housing new build programme along with a range of housing related services e.g. Care and Repair, Energy Efficiency Works, Home Safety and Minor Works. |
| **Tolerable Standard** | The standard which housing is measured against to ensure it is fit to live in. Housing that falls below this standard is designated Below Tolerable Standard (BTS). |
| **TTWA** | **Travel to Work Areas**  
A statistical tool used by Government agencies and local authorities, and especially by the Department for Work and Pensions and Job Centres, to indicate an area where the population would generally commute to a larger town, city or urban area for the purposes of employment. |
OUTER HEBRIDES LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY

2017-2022